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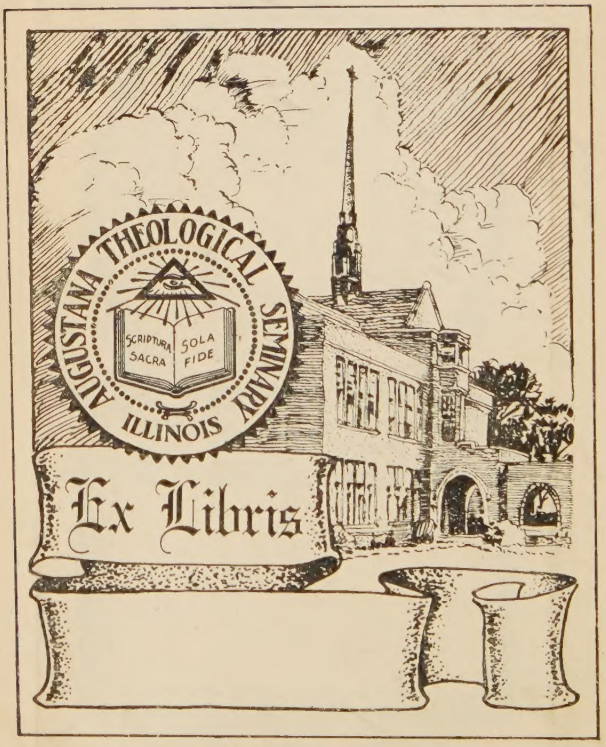

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD MISSION

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The Philosophy of the Christian World Mission

By

EDMUND DAVISON SOPER

ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS

New York • Nashville

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD MISSION

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK HAS BEEN LONG IN COMING TO BIRTH. ITS AUTHOR WAS BORN ON the mission field and from childhood expected to become a missionary; so his mind was early turned toward the problems of the world mission of Christianity. For five years he was secretary of the Missionary Education Movement and was constantly in touch with missionaries and leaders of the enterprise at the home base. As early as 1907 he gave a series of lectures on "The Bible a Missionary Book" and laid out then the general outline of his thought on that part of this volume. His conclusions at a number of places have been altered, but the general attitude has remained the same.

Since 1910 he has taught the history of religion and missions in several universities and theological seminaries. The approach to the fundamental problem of missions through the comparative study of Christianity and other religions has come out of the teaching of these courses and has resulted in convictions which have grown deeper with the passing years.

For thirteen years the author attended the meetings of a small informal company, known to its members as the "I. M. C. [International Missionary Council] Group," which met three times a year to discuss many of the questions which are dealt with here. How much he owes to these men he cannot tell, but the debt is heavy.

For the past three years he has conducted a course each year on the subject of this volume with theological students and has gone over the entire subject with such a class since the book was first put into written form. He owes much to the discussions and to the questions and suggestions made by his students during the years.

It is impossible to indicate all the sources on which the book is based. The bibliographies provided for each part list only the volumes which have been quoted or have been useful otherwise in the immediate preparation of the material used. Beyond this slender list lie many volumes and articles which obviously could not be listed.

Special indebtedness is gratefully acknowledged to several members of the Garrett faculty. Professor Otto J. Baab and Professor Paul S. Minear read the chapters on "The Biblical Background," Professor Arthur W. Nagler those on "The World Mission in History," and Professor Harris Franklin Rall those on "Christianity as the World Religion." The book

has profited by their criticisms, many of which have been incorporated in the text. They are not to be held responsible for the defects which cannot but be discovered.

The writer is under very great obligation to his wife, who typed the entire manuscript and has made many suggestions which add to clarity of thought. She has been a constant inspiration, and no other dedication could be thought of than to her. Gratitude is also felt to President Horace Greely Smith for his encouragement and to Mrs. Holly Rae Walker for her work in retyping the entire text.

If in the chaos of the times and in the necessary rethinking of the meaning of the world mission which is involved this book makes even a slight contribution, the author will be amply rewarded.

Garrett Biblical Institute **E. D. S.**
Evanston, Illinois

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Chapter I

THE PRESENT SITUATION

At every stage in the history of the Christian world mission the expansive movement has been conditioned by circumstances for which it is not responsible. This is not to say that missions are so related to their environment that they are completely determined by conditions beyond their control. One of the convictions most firmly held by those who believe in missions is that it is a movement whose aim and purpose are of divine origin, that it is God's will that the gospel should be carried to the ends of the earth and that he will be with his servants even "unto the end of the world." But it is also clear that a movement which is intimately related to a growing church and finds itself in a changing world should discover that it is faced with a task which does not remain the same from one period to another. The conviction is widespread that we are today in the midst of great changes which are affecting every phase of human life. With this in mind it is well at the beginning of our study to realize what the conditions are which must be understood and faced as the missionary enterprise goes out into the new world and seeks to be a significant influence in the life of the nations. These conditions are not far to seek and may be presented in five statements which will bring the whole situation to a focus and open the way for the discussion which is the subject of our inquiry.

1. *The missionary enterprise has come to the end of an era and is entering another.* One might say that Christian missions reached a high-water mark in 1928. In that year there were approximately thirty thousand Protestant missionaries in foreign lands, and the same number of Roman Catholics. During the same year about $60,000,000 was expended by Protestant missionary agencies and about one half that amount by Roman Catholics.[1] Never had anything like that been known before. The World War of 1914-18 interrupted missionary

[1] See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Missions Tomorrow*, p. 12.

operations seriously, but the recovery was rapid. More and more interest was being shown, and larger and larger sums of money were being devoted to missionary purposes. Then came the depression, world-wide and devastating, which brought a sense of frustration and discouragement in every activity. And now we find ourselves plunged into another World War, of which the effects may be even worse than those of the first and the years of recovery longer and more agonizing. The effect of this on missions cannot be fully predicted, but great changes are already taking place before our eyes. One does not need to look a second time to realize that the Christian mission must be very different from what it was before.

There are other features which point toward the same conclusion. The student missionary movement in the Western Protestant world, beginning in the late eighties, was one of the most remarkable uprisings in the history of the Christian Church. The quadrennial conventions of the Student Volunteer Movement, in Great Britain and even more in Canada and the United States, stirred the student world as no other movement had ever done. Thousands volunteered for the foreign field and were sent out and continue today in their service in every mission land of the world. There were of course great losses; for one reason or another many never reached the foreign field, but that did not seem in any way to chill the ardor of those who were confronted by the missionary challenge. The enthusiasm for missions at times reached the pitch that the sincerity and depth of experience of Christian students were frequently measured by their response to the foreign missionary call. An influential pamphlet written by George Sherwood Eddy, entitled *The Supreme Decision of a Christian Student,* clearly indicated the way the tide was moving. Any other decision, any decision which did not lead a student to the mission field, was suspect. Only the clearest indication that it was God's will that he should *not* go to a foreign field could give peace to an earnest soul.

But we entered a different world in the aftermath of the World War of 1914-18, and the reactions are still so new that there is difficulty in interpreting them. Other interests have come to occupy the mind of American students. They have become absorbed in social questions and are asking how to make the world a more fit place to live in. The

problems of peace and war, of employer and employee, of race and class, of national aspirations and their compatibility with Christian principles, fill the mind of the Christian student today. The newer attitude may mean a more realistic facing of ugly problems than formerly, but undoubtedly and very evidently the emphasis and type of Christian service presented are different. The remarkable thing is that the stream of candidates for the foreign field has not ceased to flow. In fact, there have been times in the last few years when more candidates have offered themselves than mission boards could send. It must also be said that the quality of the candidates has not declined; on the contrary, administrators have felt that those who have applied for the field have been of the highest type of consecration, ability, and training. But it remains true that the intellectual and social atmosphere has changed so that the appeal must be made in a different way and the Christian mission interpreted to students from a somewhat different angle than was the case until a very few years ago.

There is still other evidence that the missionary enterprise has entered a new era. The ascendency of the leadership of nationals in the churches in the mission fields is one of the most conspicuous facts in recent missionary history. This is not the place to recount the changes which have been made in leadership in all the mission fields in southern and eastern Asia; but the fact is most impressive and evidences the success of missions as much as, if not more than, anything else that could be mentioned. It is a new era, long desired and prayed for, but coming rather suddenly and unexpectedly in the upheavals which followed the first World War. No stronger evidence of the high quality of this national leadership could be found than the frequently heard testimony to the moral stability, intellectual alertness, and spiritual maturity of the Asiatic delegates to the World Missionary Conference at Madras, India, at the end of the year 1938. We now face a situation in which the word "co-operation" is much more frequently heard. The distinction between the sending countries and the receiving countries is becoming less significant. We now find ourselves working *with* the national leaders instead of *for* them, as had been true during the years of seed sowing, now giving way to a time of ingathering and reorganization and a new kind of advance.

And, finally, the situation politically in the world has changed greatly. Since the Middle Ages the idea expressed in the word "Christendom" has been current. According to Webster, Christendom is "that portion of the world in which Christianity prevails, or which is governed under Christian institutions, in distinction from heathen or Mohammedan lands." It was a rather loose idea, but nevertheless it was a reality. Christendom was found only in Europe originally, but came to include North and South America as being under the same Christian influences. To be sure, the nations in this category were frequently most unchristian, both in the management of their internal affairs and in their relations with other peoples; but they did not hesitate to call themselves Christian and to think of themselves as belonging to the family of Christian nations. But that day is past. Russia, "Holy Russia," a bulwark of the Christian faith, the chief jewel of the Eastern Orthodox Church, has officially repudiated religion, all religion, whether it be Christianity or Islam or any other. And what of Germany and its Nazism? There the new order is being built on the foundations of racial exclusiveness, narrow and intolerant nationalism, and an ideology which is inimical to democracy and which places all authority in the hands of one man, the Führer. It is "totalitarian," which from the angle of religion means that the state claims authority over the church at every point where their functions and interests overlap. Under such conditions Christianity becomes so attenuated, crippled, and distorted that it is doubtful if it should be called Christianity at all. At least one of its essential notes is lacking, that of universality. What will come in the future no one knows, but at present so far as the concept of Christendom is concerned, Germany has made it almost invalid. And about the same can be said of Italy with its Fascism, but with the difference that the state has entered into an agreement with the Vatican which gives the church rights it does not possess in Germany. At best Christendom is a sorry-looking spectacle at the present time: will it ever be an effective reality again?

One can readily see what a change this new situation has created for the Christian mission, both at the home base and in certain mission lands. Japan, which has never belonged to the family of Christian nations, has recently moved rapidly toward the totalitarian idea, as we

shall see, and is making the conduct of missionary operations exceedingly difficult both at home and wherever her authority has been carried.

2. *An increasing number of people are becoming interested in the countries where the Christian mission is being conducted, but this interest is not in many cases a missionary interest.* It is at times political. Hundreds of our best people, who in the years before the first World War were relatively indifferent, are now giving their attention to international relations. It is a wholesome trend and means much for the future as our country comes into closer and closer relations with peoples across both the Atlantic and the Pacific and south of the Rio Grande and the Caribbean. But most of those who are thus interested know little of what the Christian Church is doing in these lands. This interest is not only political; it is also economic, social, cultural, and artistic. This is especially true of people in America who have in comparatively very recent days come alive to the world beyond the seas. But again many of them are ignorant of the Christian stake in non-Christian lands. There is need to present the Christian mission in its relation to other interests so that its own distinct field and aims may stand out clearly and cogently. It comes as a revelation to men and women when they realize that Christianity has a place of outstanding importance in lands in which they had become interested on entirely different grounds. There is good reason, then, for making missions known, to interpret what we are doing as Christians and give the meaning of the results that have been accomplished.

3. *There have been significant changes in the interpretation of the Bible and of Christianity, and these are making necessary changes in the interpretation of missions.* The historical approach to the Bible, the impact of the theory of evolution on Christian theology, the rise of modernism and the opposition of fundamentalism to its positions, the rapid development and growing influence of the Barthian theology —these are all movements which have deeply affected Christian thought and are making a restatement of the Christian position necessary. They are influences coming for the most part from within the Christian Church itself. There are other tendencies coming in from the outside which are doing their part to cause theologians to take

account of their own basic assumptions and give a new interpretation of their faith. Among them are nontheistic humanism, which would have us get along without God, and secularism and naturalism, which take account only of natural laws with no sense of dependence on spiritual forces coming from a source beyond humanity itself. The particular point of emphasis here is that every change in the interpretation of Christianity necessitates an investigation of the Christian mission, so intimately are they related to each other. It can truly be said that Christian missions remain the same through the decades and centuries simply because they are Christian; it can also be said with equal truth that they differ in every age, and that to secure the wholehearted devotion of the men and women of our day they must be presented in the thought forms of today, so that they become relevant and vital.

4. *The interpretation of the non-Christian religions has entered a new phase.* This is making necessary a restudy and a restatement of their relation to Christianity. Here we come to the heart of the problem with which this book deals. Has Christianity a message which is not only unique but indispensable to the welfare of mankind? Everything hangs on the answer to that question. Old answers will not do, that is, unless they are given after full consideration of recent studies and revaluations of the other religions and their relation to Christianity. The great missionary conferences held during the last thirty years—Edinburgh in 1910, Jerusalem in 1928, Madras in 1938—have all made their contribution. So did the report of the Laymen's Inquiry which was embodied in *Re-thinking Missions,* published in 1933, and also the studies which followed the Madras Conference in 1938, and again those made in recent years by a number of scholars, notably Professor William E. Hocking, of Harvard. A heavy responsibility is laid on anyone who essays to reach definite conclusions and propagate them relative to the place of Christianity in the modern world. And yet there is no other course open to the Christian missionary and his supporters at the home base. And besides that, the growing number of men and women who are studying foreign countries and their cultures make the demand even more insistent. We who are within the ranks of those who are standing by the missionary enterprise must make good our claim that our religion possesses something which

cannot be supplied by other religions and which we must carry far and wide, or else be recreant to the task with which we have been entrusted.

5. *The appeal of missions is not a compelling influence in the thought and life of large numbers in our churches.* It is frequently looked upon as a pious, well-intentioned undertaking, but having little in it to compel the interest and influence the lives of modern, realistic, up-to-date men and women. These persons are within the church as well as outside; they frequently become a drag on the endeavors of the men and women who are seeking to make the church thoroughly missionary-minded. There are those of us who believe this condition is not necessary, but who also know that it cannot be changed without rethinking the enterprise in terms with which these objectors are familiar. This appraisal must be frank; it must be fair-minded; it must be realistic; it must not evade difficult questions; and, above all, it must touch the depths of human experience. And at the same time it must look at all the facts, show the inadequacies in much so-called popular thinking about the non-Christian religions, and be deeply Christian. Nothing can be gained by evading the main issue, that the Christian missionary enterprise is just what its name indicates, an earnest endeavor to make known the message of God which came into the world in the life, teaching, and personality of Jesus Christ. Our allegiance is to the God who is revealed in him, our Savior and our Lord. In other words we must understand what this audacious undertaking stands for, what it is doing, and what its purposes are. We want devotion of life and consecration of money, but these ends can be secured only on the foundation of an intelligent appreciation of the meaning of the enterprise.

Our function, then, is one of interpretation. Here is a great expansive movement now almost two thousand years old. It has had close and significant relations with the history of the Western world. And at the present time it is in intimate contact with world movements in every region where a contest is going on between nations fighting desperately for supremacy and determined to win. The Christian mission cannot but be profoundly influenced by these world movements. There is good reason why those who believe in the world mission of Chris-

tianity should survey the task and take account of their resources. Many questions present themselves for investigation and inquiry. The numbers of communicants in non-Christian countries, the strength of the churches which have been established, the effectiveness of the institutions ministering to human need—schools, hospitals, and other centers of active service—the size and efficiency of the missionary personnel, the usefulness of the methods which have been employed, the relation of nationals to the foreign missionary, the history and condition of the church in various countries—these and other problems must be carefully considered by competent students and administrators, and undoubtedly changes in the program will as a result be adopted.

The purpose of the study upon which we are entering is closely related to all these lines of investigation, but it is somewhat different. We shall attempt to get back of the practical direction of the enterprise and make a study of the underlying reasons for its existence, backgrounds in the biblical revelation and in history, the validity of the aim to carry the Christian gospel to peoples who already have religions of their own, and those fundamental relations which the missionary movement has and must have if it is to perform its task at all. We are interested here in major strategy and not in the tactics of actual missionary operations. What are the ultimate aims of the movement, and how are they related to nationalism in the modern world, and to the indigenous cultures with which they come into contact? How are missions related to the Church of Christ and to the Kingdom of God? These are questions which lie back of all others. They must have an answer if the world mission is to continue to appeal to intelligent men and women who have been standing by the enterprise and who at this time of crisis in human affairs want to understand its significance in the light of present-day tendencies in life and thought. This book is written to help provide the kind of undergirding which is needed in a day like the present, to the end that men may have their convictions clarified and their loyalty deepened in carrying out the will of God, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Part One

THE BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter II

PROPHETIC UNIVERSALISM

UNIVERSALISM IS A CHILD OF MONOTHEISM. THE IDEA THAT ONE GOD should be acknowledged by all men everywhere can come to birth only when belief in other gods has been cast out. The missionary idea does not enter the minds of people who worship more gods than one. In that case the jurisdiction of any one god is limited, either territorially or in function, and it is perfectly natural for each group to think of other peoples as having their gods just as it has its own. But when monotheism prevails, its natural corollary is universalism. In the words of George Foot Moore, "If there be but one God, there can be but one religion; and the idea of unity in religion carries with it the idea of universality." [1] So in a study of the biblical background of the Christian missionary enterprise we begin in the Old Testament, seeking to discover the origins and development of belief in the one God, besides whom "there is no God." [2]

This must not be taken to mean that the unitary conception of God is solely responsible for the missionary idea. There are many monotheists, and many who take their monotheism seriously, who are not aware of their obligation to carry the knowledge of their one God to people who do not worship him. Only when there is a realization of the character of God as contrasted with the divine beings of other peoples can the missionary impulse begin to take shape. So in the discussion which follows we shall attempt to show the development of the deepening conception of God as well as of his oneness as the God of all men. But it must never be forgotten that monotheism is a prerequisite for the expansion of a religion into a movement which reaches out to include all peoples within the scope of its redeeming activity.

To trace this development is not an easy task, but it has been made a far more satisfactory undertaking during the past half century and

[1] *Judaism*, I, 228.
[2] Isa. 44:6.

more by the work of many scholars both in Europe and in this country. They have brought to light the underlying structure of the Old Testament documents and have made it possible to trace the historical development of institutions and beliefs which had previously been a confusing enigma. It is impossible here to go into the details of the long and fascinating story, and yet it is so important to have an understanding of the main features of the development that it must be given as briefly as possible. Beyond that the reader is directed to the many manuals which are readily accessible.[3]

We begin with Moses. In the words of Oesterley and Robinson, "He was the originator alike of her national unity and of her religion. . . . . With Moses began the process which ended in the appearance of a race which hitherto no hostility or persecution had robbed of its sense of nationality or of its faith—the most durable people in human history." [4]

There is great uncertainty concerning the pre-Mosaic religion of Israel. The accounts in the Book of Genesis were written long after the events recorded and reflect the religious and social ideas of the period when they were produced. There are several strands in the tradition which was handed down, yet all of them are at one in asserting that Jehovah, or Yahweh, had been known before the time of Moses, that is, from the time when it is recorded that God spoke to Abraham. This is clearly indicated in Exodus 6:2-3: "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them." So he was made known to the patriarchs, though we know very little of the conception they had of him. Something new and important was added in the revelation to Moses. This comes out in the experience of Moses at the burning bush, the bush which was on fire but was not consumed.[5] After he had heard the commission to go back to Egypt to deliver his people from Pharaoh, we are told that "Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of

[3] See Bibliography.
[4] *Hebrew Religion* (2nd ed.), p. 125.
[5] Exod. 3:1-15.

your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

We must be careful not to read back into such statements the conceptions of a later time. The idea of God among the Hebrews had a long history, and his purpose for them became evident very slowly. It is not clear exactly what was intended to be conveyed by these enigmatic words. We do not receive much help from other possible renderings such as, "I AM BECAUSE I AM," or "I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE."[6] "I AM" indicates that he is the living God, "I WILL BE" that he will continue to be what he is now. He is the God who does and will reveal himself. He is in human history and has dealings with his people. Beyond this it is difficult to go with any certainty so far as these words are concerned. We have other evidence, however, to help us to realize what the God of Moses and his successors was like.

How shall we describe this religion? Of one thing we may be sure: it was not monotheistic. Taking monotheism in its accepted meaning as the belief in and worship of one God only, one does not find it difficult to show that it was centuries before this lofty and exclusive belief became the creed of the people of Israel. That height was reached only by the great prophets of a later period, and between Moses and that time the people whom Moses had led out of Egypt were being welded into a nation very different from the refugees who had escaped into the desert. The religion of Moses was henotheism, which is "the belief in a single God without asserting that he is the only God," and the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* continues, "a stage of belief between polytheism and monotheism." It was not monotheism, for the god who was worshiped was not looked upon as the one God of the whole earth to whom every people owe allegiance. This does not minimize the greatness of Moses. He it was who first among his people rose to the realization that for him and those entrusted to his guidance there was but one God and that it was disloyalty for them to worship any other. This became the most precious

[6] See margin of American Standard Version.

possession of the Jewish race, a heritage which, enlarged and enriched, became their distinguishing characteristic. Out of this soil flowered the universalism of the prophets, which in turn came to its full bloom in the missionary principle of Christianity. But in the long years during which the development was taking place the vision of Moses was at times almost lost, and never was it the assured conviction of all the people.

Some definite things may be said about the God of Moses and his successors. He was a storm God. "And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off."[7] This thought of God remained with them. We are told that in her prayer Hannah said,

> They that strive with Jehovah shall be broken to pieces;
> Against them will he thunder in heaven.[8]

It is even more significant that "he was a god of war, battling for his people and leading them to victory."[9]

> Jehovah is a man of war:
> Jehovah is his name.
> Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea.[10]

There is said to have been a book called "the book of the Wars of Jehovah."[11] A close connection exists between this idea and the Ark of the Covenant, which was "at one and the same time the primitive sanctuary and the battle standard."[12]

Jehovah was also a tribal God. Among the passages indicating this relation between Jehovah and Israel one may be quoted: "But if thou shalt indeed hearken unto his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine

[7] Exod. 20:18; also 19:18.
[8] I Sam. 2:10.
[9] H. E. Fosdick, *A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, p. 5.
[10] Exod. 15:3-4.
[11] Num. 21:14.
[12] H. W. Robinson, *Religious Ideas of the Old Testament*, p. 56.

adversaries." [13] The people of Israel early began to feel that they were God's chosen people, that he was their own possession and not the God of others. Even in a very different time, when the prophets had done their work and God was looked upon as the ruler of the whole earth, the thought that they were the chosen people at times made void the universalism of their belief and led them into a narrowness which made impossible the carrying out of God's purpose through them. They were monotheists in theory but scarcely in practice, despite all that had taken place. Even idolatry continued. We are told that in the crude days of the judges a man named Micah was given silver by his mother, who turned it over "to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image," all in the name of Jehovah.[14] Even as late as the time of Hosea the prophet felt it was necessary to rebuke the people for idolatry: "The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images." [15]

They were nomadic people when they came into the land of Canaan, not accustomed to the settled life of an agricultural community. But they had come to live permanently in the land. That meant a revolutionary change in their mode of life; something happened also to their religion and to their thought of God, the God who in their thought up to this time had his chief seat on a mountain far out in the desert. In short this God of the wide open spaces became the God of a people who were now primarily farmers rather than shepherds. This was a change fraught with many issues, and it did not take place without a struggle lasting through a long period. In a real sense Jehovah traveled from Mount Sinai to his new residence in Canaan in the Ark of the Covenant,[16] and only at long last was the new country called "Jehovah's land." [17] Even when this took place, Jehovah was looked upon as having a limited sovereignty. When Saul drove David away from the uplands of western Palestine, it was to David as if he had

[13] Exod. 23:22.
[14] Judg. 17:1-6.
[15] Hos. 11:2; see also 8:4-6.
[16] See Num. 14:41-45; also II Sam. 6:2-15.
[17] Hos. 9:3.

been told to serve other gods, those into whose jurisdiction he was being forced against his will; "for they have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods." [18] This meant that other gods were recognized as having authority outside the land of Israel. Ashtoreth was the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of Ammon.[19] This attitude persisted even as late as the time of Jeremiah.[20]

When Jehovah became the deity of the Israelites in their own land, there arose the danger of syncretism, or assimilation with the agricultural gods, the many local Baals which were to be found everywhere. They were the divinities of the Canaanitish population, who were in the land when the people of Israel took possession. The people were tempted to worship these Baals, not to the exclusion of, but in addition to, their own Jehovah. But this division of allegiance could not well continue with people who had knowledge of a God like Jehovah. In the end he was looked upon as himself having the qualities of an agricultural god in addition to his other qualities. We begin to find him being worshiped in agricultural festivals, feasts of Unleavened Bread, Tabernacles, Weeks, and Harvests, all of which were new to Israel and came out of their Canaanite environment. A heavy price was paid for this partial assimilation. With all his warlikeness Jehovah had been "virile, austere, and chaste." [21] But wherever they are found, gods of agriculture have not been chaste. As a result sexuality crept in,[22] Jehovah being worshiped even in the likeness of a bull, the symbol of sexual virility.[23] Together with this immorality, social injustice began to show its head. Unknown in the simple life of their nomadic days, all sorts of inequalities came in with city life, with its division of labor, stratification of society, commercial development, and unequal distribution of wealth.

In the midst of all this arose the "titanic figure" of Elijah, one of the

[18] I Sam. 26:17-19.
[19] I Kings 11:33.
[20] Jer. 16:13.
[21] Fosdick, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
[22] II Kings 23:7; Hos. 4:13-14.
[23] I Kings 12:26-29.

mightiest men in all the history of Israel. He was the protagonist of Jehovah, opposed to religious syncretism and to the economic and social injustice which went with it. This double aspect of his opposition comes to a focus in two episodes: Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel [24] and his denunciation of Ahab's sin in depriving Naboth of his vineyard.[25] The "Yahwist Revival," as Elijah's work has been called, was a contest, not only to reassert the supremacy of Jehovah over Israel as its only God, but to demonstrate that this Jehovah was a righteous God, who stood against social abuses and highhanded injustice. One cannot overstate the importance of Elijah in the history of religion. Jehovah was not only to be looked upon as Israel's only God but as the one who was what he was because he hated sin and loved righteousness. With all this, however, we must not forget that in his day Elijah did not realize the full import of what he was doing. He did not deny the existence of Melkart, the god of the Phoenicians, who had been brought into Palestine by Jezebel, nor question his right to be god in his own country. What Elijah was asserting was the sole right of Jehovah to be worshiped in Israel, and this he did with a depth of conviction which places his name high among the saviors of his people and mighty opponents of religious contamination. It remained for others to complete his task, but it is quite possible that there would have been much less to work on had it not been for the courageous stand taken by this fiery prophet.

It was a memorable day in the religious life of Israel when the rough, uncouth desert prophet Amos came striding through the streets of Bethel crying out, "For three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." His lashing did not stop with Damascus. He went on with his denunciation, repeating the same words as he drew within the circle of his condemnation cities and lands in every direction—Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. The Bethelites were doubtless whipped into a frenzy of joy over these strictures hurled at their enemies, but it was a very different story when Amos went on and in the same determined

[24] I Kings 18:20-46.
[25] I Kings 21:1-29.

mood included Judah, their alienated kinsmen to the south, and finally themselves, Israel, in his terrible onslaught.[26] What did it mean? What was new in his prophetic utterance? For the first time in the history of Israel one of their prophets was declaring that all peoples, other nations as well as Israel and Israel as well as other nations, were to be judged by the same moral law of a God of righteousness. We may not assert that this was complete monotheism, but it was a long step in that direction, arrived at not by philosophical speculation but by ethical intuition and insight. God was in the act of revealing himself. There was much ground yet to be covered, but a nail had been driven in a sure place. The monotheism of this people was to be a combined declaration that there was only one God and that he was a God of moral concern. Hear Amos' words: "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth." [27] Here is judgment, but judgment which is evenhanded in that Jehovah treats all nations alike. Again he declares: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?" [28]

In spite of all the prophets could do, calamity came to Israel. First the Northern Kingdom, in 722 B.C., and then the Southern Kingdom of Judah, in 586, were carried off into captivity. Before these events, but following the prophecies of Amos, much had been added to the conception of the character of Jehovah and his sovereign rule over the whole earth, which we can only mention. Jeremiah had passed through a religious experience which brought home to him the reality of a direct, personal relation with God. Such an individualizing of religion was a new note in the Old Testament. The experience was so deep that the prophet could speak of it as a new relationship between God and his people: "Behold, the days are come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . . I will put my

[26] Amos 1–2.
[27] Amos 9:9.
[28] Amos 9:7.

law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it"![29] Is it any wonder that this prophet should have seen his God as "the true God"? "He is the living God, and an everlasting King." As for the other gods, "these shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens."[30] Another step was thus taken in God's revelation of himself as the God who comes into the most intimate relations with his children and who at the same time is the one true God.

It remained for the bitter experience of captivity, when the people of Israel were unwelcome aliens in a strange land, to bring to fruition all that had been proclaimed in the past. Especially in the second part of the Book of Isaiah[31] we reach the high water mark of Israel's religious genius. There we learn the full meaning of God's revelation of himself to his chosen people, chosen for the express purpose of receiving this revelation and making it known to the ends of the earth. There is no part of this disclosure more significant than the insistence on the oneness of God as the only God and on his love as he looks out on all the nations and peoples with tender concern. Here are several of the most notable utterances:

I am Jehovah, and there is none else; besides me there is no God. I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me: I am Jehovah, and there is none else.[32]

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.[33]

Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. . . . . He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.[34]

[29] Jer. 31:31-34.
[30] Jer. 10:10-11.
[31] Chaps. 40–55.
[32] Isa. 45:5-6; see also 43:10-11; 45:18; 40:12-15, 28.
[33] Isa. 45:22-23.
[34] Isa. 42:1, 4.

Jehovah speaks to Israel as his servant, who had passed through the purifying furnace of the captivity for a lofty purpose:

> It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth.[35]
>
> Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah . . . . even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer . . . . for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.[36]

Many other passages in the prophets and in the Psalms might be quoted to the same effect.

At last ethical monotheism had come to its own and had given birth to universalism. This is the crown of the religion of the Old Testament. The Christian Church cannot dispense with this message of the oneness and righteousness of God and his gracious purpose toward all peoples everywhere. This is the missionary message of the Old Testament. It is so deeply imbedded in the kind of monotheism which crowns the older revelation that universalism is a cardinal doctrine in Judaism today. Even though the Jewish church does not give itself to evangelism and has no missionary program, the broad outlook of their prophets is firmly held, and the devout look forward to the day when the Gentiles shall turn to Jehovah and all nations shall worship him.

Even with their belief in the wide scope of the love of God for other peoples, the people of Israel did not realize some of the implications of this belief. They failed to see that the inclusion of Gentiles in God's purpose of redemption implied the equality of Gentiles with themselves in the messianic kingdom which was to come. As they pictured the future, Jerusalem was to be the center of the world's true religion, and they its favored ministers and priests. None others could perform these important functions. We read, "And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain

[35] Isa. 49:6.
[36] Isa. 56:6-7.

of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."[37] What we have here is, as George Foot Moore puts it, "the national religion internationalized,"[38] with the people of Israel remaining intact and with a unique function to perform.

The history of the period after the captivity in Babylon shows clearly that the high levels reached by the Second Isaiah and Jeremiah were not consistently maintained. A narrowing process was at work which seriously limited their vision. As the years passed the problem of preserving the identity of the Jewish people as a separate social group became very real. The leaders became intolerant and subjected the people to the most stringent measures to maintain the purity of their blood as a distinct people. The last chapter of the Book of Ezra recounts the tragic story of the putting away of the non-Jewish wives who had been brought into their homes. It would seem that a clean sweep was made. According to the account in Nehemiah, scriptural ground was sought for the radical step which was being taken. Forgetting or discarding the teaching of the Exilic prophets, they went back to Deuteronomy. "On that day," so it is declared in Nehemiah, "they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that an Ammonite and a Moabite should not enter into the assembly of God forever. . . . . And it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude."[39] This may have been the only way to preserve their identity as a separate people, but it was done at terrible cost.

This narrow, intolerant attitude was offset, however, by two remarkable little books in the Old Testament, both of them probably coming out of this time and designed to state and illustrate a more kindly attitude toward the outsider. One of them is the delightful love story of Ruth, which, while placed in our Bibles just after the Book of Judges, doubtless belongs to the post-Exilic period. It breathes a different spirit and was surely designed to convey a more tolerant attitude to the

[37] Isa. 2:3.
[38] *Op. cit.*, I, 230.
[39] Neh. 13:1, 3.

alien. The reason for the writing of the book is given almost at the end where, speaking of the baby boy born to Ruth we read, "They called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David." [40] So then Ruth was the great-grandmother of David, and Ruth was one of the despised, non-Israelitish people of Moab! Among those who could not "enter the assembly of God forever" were the people of Moab. Was this not to be found in Moses,[41] and was that not sufficient reason for putting away foreign wives? And yet there was David, their greatest hero, the ideal king, of whose line there should be no end, and from whom should come the Messiah who would deliver his people Israel; and he was a descendent of a Gentile Moabitish woman! It must have come as a stinging rebuke to their attitude of condescension toward all peoples who were not of their blood. The prophets had not spoken in vain when such a tale could be told, filled with their spirit.

The other writing is the Book of Jonah, which has been called "the most missionary book in the Old Testament." The chief difficulty in interpreting the book is that it has been treated as history instead of as an allegory or near allegory, intended to be a "tract for the times." So much time is usually spent on the episode of the great fish that the purpose of the book is all but forgotten. Jonah may be said to represent Israel, who was told to go to Nineveh and preach God's message to that wicked city. Just as Israel had not heeded such a command, so Jonah ran away. There are many picturesque details which give interest to the story, but the aim of the writer is clear—to show that as Jonah had been restored, so Israel had been brought back from captivity and again was given the opportunity to carry God's message to pagan peoples. Would they do it? Jonah did, even though it was with poor grace. He was disgruntled with God's kindness and mercy to the Ninevites, just as his kinsmen were obstinately selfish and were hugging their religion to their own breasts as if it were their exclusive possession. It was to counteract this attitude that this little tract must have been written. The final appeal put into the mouth of Jehovah himself is strikingly touching and pertinent: "Should not

[40] Ruth 4:17.
[41] Deut. 23:3.

I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" [42] Here again was a gifted storyteller who had penetrated to the core of prophetic universalism and become indignant at the callous indifference of his compatriots when they failed to recognize their responsibility to their pagan neighbors on every side.

What influence, if any, did these protests have? The history of the centuries following the return from Babylon is very obscure. We simply do not know what happened during a long period. The First Book of Maccabees in the Apocrypha is a valuable and dependable document, but the remarkable story which it recounts does not begin until 175 B.C. From that time on the course of events clears somewhat, but even then much that we would like to know receives no mention. From our viewpoint in this study, a very significant movement begins to emerge as we approach the time of Christ. We do not know when it began, but it was in full operation when Jesus was preaching in Galilee and Jerusalem. It was a missionary movement in Judaism—the carrying out of the ideals of the prophets—and was at work wherever the synagogue was to be found. The Jew was seeking with earnest and commendable zeal to win men to a belief in Jehovah and to the high moral life which following Jehovah involved. The vision of the prophets was finding fulfillment; many in the synagogue had been caught by the evangelistic spirit, feeling themselves under obligation to make the one God and his righteousness known to "the nations."

The success of the movement was surprising. A careful investigation was made by Professor Adolf Harnack, and its results are embodied in his *Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries.* Jewish synagogues were widely scattered in the Roman Empire, on both sides of the Mediterranean from the Pillars of Hercules to Syria, and then on farther east to Mesopotamia and Babylon and even into Media. We are told that there were a million Jews in Egypt, more than a million in Syria, seven hundred thousand in Pal-

[42] Jonah 4:11.

estine, and a million and a half in other parts of the Empire. This comes to approximately four and a half millions. Now when the total population of the empire at the time of Augustus Caesar is estimated as being between fifty-four and sixty millions, the Jewish people would make up about seven per cent of the entire population, a large and powerful element which had to be reckoned with. The conclusion of Harnack is that this great number of Jews cannot be accounted for by the natural increase in the Jewish families. His explanation is that the religious propaganda must be taken into account to explain the size of the Jewish community. It was a successful mission. The message which the Jew felt he must carry to the pagans was that of "the one and only spiritual God, creator of heaven and earth, with his holy moral law." [43]

This missionary movement deserves careful study, both in its likenesses to, and dissimilarities from, the Christian movement which followed it and which must have been influenced to some extent by it. George Foot Moore brings out one important difference. When a Gentile became a convert to Judaism he entered the Jewish community and was thereby cut off from his former affiliations. He became "denationalized" as he became naturalized into the Jewish nation. The Jews were looked upon in the Roman Empire as a people apart, not to be dealt with as the other peoples who were incorporated into the empire. They were a nation within a nation. Those who became full-fledged proselytes through circumcision were an integral part of that separated community. This conception of conversion is a kind of religious imperalism. It demanded submission to the whole Jewish system and amalgamation in the national organization.

To become a proselyte the convert must submit to circumcision, be immersed in water, and present an offering in the temple.[44] But beside those who were thus completely amalgamated in the Jewish nation, the only real "proselytes," there were many others who were adherents only, men and women who had turned away from the idolatry in which they had been born and from the immorality which sur-

[43] Harnack, *op. cit.*, Bk. I, chap. i.

[44] For this and other references see Moore, *op. cit.*, I, 231-34.

rounded them on every side. The pure and somewhat severe ethical system of the Jews and their belief in one God made a great appeal to high-minded Greeks and Romans, many of whom did not feel justified in breaking all their connections and being amalgamated with the Jewish nation. A number of these appear in the New Testament and are given the name of "those who fear God" or the "God-fearing." There is the centurion of whom certain "elders of the Jews" declared, "He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue," [45] and also the centurion Cornelius, of whom it is said that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." [46] They were not recognized as proselytes but nevertheless were to all intents and purposes one with the Jewish community in belief and conduct.

It must not be thought that the leaders among the Jews were in agreement concerning this missionary propaganda. There was strong opposition as well as ardent advocacy. It can be seen very clearly in the difference between the two famous rabbis, Hillel and Shammai, who were teaching at the time Jesus was born and have ever since been held in high esteem. Of Hillel it was said that he "was accustomed, with his pupils, to pay special attention to the propaganda of religion. 'Love men and draw them to the Law' is one of the traditional maxims." [47] Paul's teacher, Gamaliel, was a follower of Hillel in his interest in the mission. Shammai was on the other side—not that he declared against it out and out, but that he required such rigorous conditions of the converts that it was very difficult to become a proselyte. The commonly accepted verdict has been that the school of Shammai was completely victorious; that after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the final abortive revolt against Roman authority under Bar Cochba in 132, there was no further proselyting among Gentiles. This conclusion is probably wrong, at least in its extreme form. It must be acknowledged that there was no propaganda or special mission to Gentiles, and yet for several centuries

[45] Luke 7:3-5.
[46] Acts 10:2.
[47] Harnack, *op. cit.*, I, 17.

Gentiles were reached and became members of the Jewish community. At least the interest in outsiders gives evidence that the intelligent leaders of the synagogue were aware of the universalistic implications of their faith and were glad to welcome the Gentile and give him a religious home within their circle and bring "the alien under the wings of the Shekinah." [48] Even this more or less sporadic evangelism did not continue through the Middle Ages and has not been undertaken in modern times. Nevertheless, the Jew has not forgotten the universalism of the Second Isaiah and looks forward to the day when the knowledge of Jehovah shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

[48] For a recent discussion (1940) of this subject see the monograph by W. G. Braude, *Jewish Proselyting*, etc.

Chapter III

JESUS CHRIST AND THE WORLD MISSION

WITHOUT JESUS CHRIST THERE WOULD BE NO CHRISTIAN WORLD MISSION. The message of Christianity is that God has revealed himself to the world in Jesus Christ. The first purpose of missions is to make him known so that men may be led to accept him as Savior and Lord. Our aim here is to discover what connection Jesus had with the beginning of the enterprise. What was his attitude toward the Gentiles, lying outside the pale of his own people? Did he contemplate a mission extending to the bounds of the Roman Empire and even beyond? Did he turn his disciples in that direction and commission them to take up this wide-reaching task? The answer to these questions would appear very simple: all we have to do is to present the sayings of Jesus in which he speaks of the coming of his kingdom and the duty of his followers to "preach the gospel to every creature." [1] It is not difficult to find striking proof texts and to think that they settle the question once and for all. But this is not the case. There is a real problem involved, and it must be faced; the questions to be answered must be taken up one by one and studied with all the light that is available.

Of all the problems which have been encountered in the attempt to understand the Bible in the light of the investigations of the past century the most important and the most difficult are those connected with the life and work of Jesus Christ. No other body of literature has been subjected to such minute and careful scrutiny as the Four Gospels. And on a number of the questions which have to do with Jesus' connection with the world mission the investigation has been most vigorously pursued. Some unanimity has been reached, but at several very significant points the problems seem to be far from a solution. It may be that we shall not be able to secure enough light

[1] Mark 16:15 (A.V.).

to come to a satisfying conclusion and that we shall have to leave a number of matters unsettled. Open questions do not allow the mind to feel at rest, but it may be necessary to accept them as such and go on with such results as we can attain from other avenues of approach.

Jesus built on foundations deeply laid in the thought and life of his own people. The heritage of the Old Testament was most precious to him. He built upon it as a secure basis for his own mission. Jesus' teaching about God and his relations with men was taken from the earlier revelation, particularly the Old Testament prophets. He made some significant additions, but the groundwork was not his own creation. God had revealed himself to the people of Israel through their history, their singers, wisemen, and prophets; and Jesus entered deeply into the meaning of this legacy and made it his own. One of the most significant lines of investigation in recent years has been the study of the backgrounds of Jesus' thinking, those ideas which he appropriated from the past, which he wove into the fabric of his own teaching, and which became determinative of some at least of his attitudes and modes of procedure. This is not to minimize Jesus' own contribution but to give it the right setting. Much of what he said and did remains uncertain and at times almost completely dark to us today unless interpreted in terms of these backgrounds. This is particularly true of the subject of our present inquiry. So we turn to the past, to things in Jesus' environment coming out of the traditions of his people, as one of the most hopeful means of understanding what Jesus said and what he felt about the expansion of the movement which he inaugurated.

There are at least three fruitful lines of approach, two of which have already been mentioned. The first is the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. Their universalism could scarcely have been lost on Jesus. His familiarity with the ancient writings of his people was intimate and profound. The thought of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, as it was unfolded in the servant songs in Isaiah, entered deeply into Jesus' thought of his own sacrificial death—and the mission of the Servant, as we have seen, was extended to the Gentiles. The words of Amos, declaring the inclusion of other nations as well

as Israel and Judah within the scope of the judgment of his God of righteousness; the brooding concern of Jeremiah, who saw both deeply and widely into the meaning of human sin and its terrible outcome—these could not fail to find an echo in the heart of Jesus. He realized the meaning of the judgments of God as keenly as Amos and entered into the experiences of Jeremiah as the prophet faced life and its issues both in the individual and among the nations. There are many other illustrations of this outlook in the Old Testament which could not fail to be known and appreciated by our Lord. The very psalm whose opening words Jesus quoted as he was dying on the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[2] contains a universalistic note which is based on the prophetic attitude:

> All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah;
> And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.
> For the kingdom is Jehovah's;
> And he is the ruler over the nations.[3]

We cannot hope for the certainty of demonstration when dealing with matters which enter so far into inner attitudes and springs of action; but if any conclusion is to be drawn at all from the relation of Jesus to the prophetic utterances, it can only be that they must have struck a responsive chord in his heart and that his own sympathies and outlook could not be more restricted than theirs.

Another approach is through the outreach of the Jewish community to the Gentiles before and during the lifetime of Jesus himself. This has been described before, and the details need not be presented again. The only direct statement we have from Jesus about this movement is contained in a saying in which he condemns the attitude of the Pharisees, not because they were interested in the Gentiles, but because of their baneful influence on those who became proselytes. His terrible words are: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves"![4] The

[2] Ps. 22:1.
[3] Ps. 22:27-28.
[4] Matt. 23:15.

abuses to which he referred would not be likely to blind his eyes to the nobler aspects of the enterprise. In fact, we know that they did not. Several times he came into contact with the results of this missionary movement, and they evoked a very different and appreciative response. Once Jesus was summoned to the home of a Roman centurion whose servant "was sick and at the point of death." This officer was one of the "God-fearing," who had not become a proselyte but had accepted the God of the Jews as his own and had placed himself under the discipline of the moral law of the Old Testament. He was deeply in earnest and had approved himself to the best men of the Jewish community, who said of him, "He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue." When Jesus was brought to this Roman and had talked with him, he is said to have "marveled at him," and he gave this testimony: "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." [5] Can any definite conclusions be drawn from Jesus' knowledge of, and contact with, this missionary activity? At least this: Jesus was acquainted with the movement, based on the wide outlook of the prophets and highly successful in many parts of the empire; he found at least one convert whose faith won his admiration; it seems highly probable that his own outlook on the mission for which he came and for which he was training his disciples should not be less responsive to the inclusion of Gentiles than the Judaism whose Messiah he was commissioned by God to be. This conclusion is not lightly to be set aside by considerations which would seem to militate against it, to be taken up and discussed shortly.

There is still a third approach which until now has not been mentioned. It is the teaching of various writers in the intertestamental period, the period of the Greek dominance during the three centuries before the time Jesus lived and taught. During this period there were two tendencies struggling within Judaism, one universalistic and the other attempting to restrict the God of Israel to his own people. Both had their roots in tendencies which showed themselves during the Exile and after the return from captivity. These have already been

[5] Luke 7:2-10.

dealt with, but not the subsequent influence in the Greek period. The intermingling of peoples which followed the conquests of Alexander the Great, the scattering of the Jewish people to the farthest bounds of the Roman Empire (the Diaspora), and the consequent and necessary mingling of the Jews with their Gentile neighbors—all this made for a more open attitude toward the peoples with whom they had to deal. The writings of this period, not included in the canon of the Jewish Scriptures, often gave expression to a wide interest in, and concern for, Gentiles as well as Jews. Only a few references can be given here:

> And the sceptre of my kingdom shall shine forth: and from your root shall arise a stem; and from it shall grow up a rod of righteousness unto the Gentiles, to judge and to save all that shall call upon the Lord.[6]
>
> A bright light shall shine unto all the ends of the earth; many nations shall come from afar, and the inhabitants of the utmost ends of the earth unto thy holy name.[7]

Two others are from the best-known writing in this literature, the Book of Enoch:

> And all nations shall offer adoration, and shall praise me, and all shall worship me.[8]
>
> He [the Son of Man] shall be a staff to the righteous whereon to stay themselves and not fall, and he shall be the light to the Gentiles.[9]

These writings were in circulation among the Jews at the time of Jesus, and it cannot be doubted that he knew about them. In fact, we have very good proof that he made use of the forms of thought and of ideas which were characteristic of these books.[10] We enter at this point one of the fields of recent controversy. How far was Jesus carried by the apocalyptic ideas which he came in contact with in

[6] Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Judah 24:5-6.
[7] Tobit 13:11.
[8] Enoch 10:21.
[9] Enoch 48:4.
[10] For this entire question see Oesterley, *The Jews and Judaism During the Greek Period,* chap. viii.

these writers? The final answer cannot yet be made. We may be sure, however, that the extreme view of Albert Schweitzer and his school will not in the end prevail—the view that Jesus was a deluded enthusiast who looked for God to deliver him at the last moment in Jerusalem. A more moderate viewpoint is now accepted by the majority of scholars. But we may surely say that Jesus looked for a consummation, a Day of the Lord, when the Kingdom of God would be ushered in with power and the present world order would come to an end. The thirteenth chapter of Mark has been called the "Little Apocalypse," but there is division of opinion as to whether it came from Jesus or was incorporated in part or as a whole from another source. Our interest in this literature has been to see that Jesus was well acquainted with it and that it was in the frame of some of the ideas which it contained that he taught concerning the future and the carrying out of his purpose. We have seen that the universalism of the prophets was carried over into these writings and could scarcely fail to influence the outlook of Jesus.

But we must also realize that narrow views were vigorously presented by some of the writers of this period. Two illustrations will suffice:

> Separate thyself from the nations and eat not thou with them; and do not according to their works, and become not their associate; for their works are unclean, and all their ways are a pollution and an abomination and uncleanness.[11]
>
> He shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth, and at his rebuke nations shall flee before him . . . . and neither sojourner nor alien shall sojourn with them [i.e., the Jews] any more.[12]

With this background it is not difficult to understand the exclusive attitude of many of the Jews of Jesus' day, who would have nothing to do with the Gentiles and looked upon them with contempt. Here, then, we have the points of view in the light of which Jesus carried out his mission. He often found himself in opposition to the Pharisees. They were "the exponents *par excellence* of Particular-

[11] Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Levi 22:16.
[12] Psalms of Solomon 7:27-31.

ism."[13] They stood against Jesus' liberal attitude toward much in Judaism, and in the early period of the life of the church those among them who accepted Jesus as the Messiah caused difficulty by demanding that the laws of Moses be observed with no relaxation. One of the problems we must face is to know what to do with several sayings of Jesus which seem to be an echo of this very narrow viewpoint.

A significant fact about the life and work of Jesus is that he undertook no mission outside his own country or to other than his own people. Yes, he traveled once "into the borders of Tyre and Sidon,"[14] in what was then more or less distant Phoenicia; but it was not for the purpose of preaching to people in a foreign land. It was rather to escape from the authorities in Palestine. When the Syrophoenician woman came to him and besought him to cast a devil out of her daughter, his words have a strange sound; "Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."[15] They sound like the words of an intolerant Jew and not a broad-gauged humanitarian. But are they to be taken seriously? Was not Jesus testing the woman's eager faith? The sequel shows that Jesus had no aversion towards this woman, for he healed her daughter, with a commendation of her wit and the appropriateness of her response to his scathing reference. He treated this Gentile as he would one of his own people, even though he limited his activities to his own country.

So it becomes necessary to look with care at Jesus' purpose and determine if possible the reasons for the seeming narrow scope of his activities. Jesus declared that his mission was to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God. He makes no direct statement about its possible extent; his interest was directed to its inner content and to the training of a group of disciples who should assist him in its proclamation. He was a Jew and was deeply conscious of the word of God to his own people, eager to have them heed that call and enter into the full meaning of the life of the kingdom. As John's Gospel has it, "He came unto his own."[16] Jesus was convinced that in the provi-

[13] Oesterley, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[14] Mark 7:24-30.
[15] Mark 7:27.
[16] John 1:11.

dence of God the Jewish race was a specially chosen people. This was the meaning of their history; had not God entered into covenant relations with them? Whatever else was to be done, the first aim must be to win his people to himself as their Messiah and to his mission. The memorable episode at Caesarea Philippi,[17] when he asked his disciples who they thought he was, is most important. When Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ," one of the goals of Jesus had been attained. He had now a small group of followers who began to see, however dimly, that their master was none other than the Promised One to whom their whole history pointed. "He came unto his own"—that was the only thing Jesus could do—but "they that were his own received him not." Jesus began at once after Peter's confession to tell them that "the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."[18] He saw that the carrying out of his mission involved his own death. He speaks in anticipation of his passion with deeply moving words, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and now am I straitened till it be accomplished!"[19] The coming of the kingdom with which he was charged meant passing through an awful experience. Could the disciples be held together in spite of their disappointment and even disillusionment? Could he give the necessary instruction in the short time he was to have with them so that they would understand what he meant by the Kingdom of God? These were surely among the thoughts which filled his mind as he came nearer and nearer to the fateful event which he saw ahead of him and them in Jerusalem. Considerations such as these help us to understand the direction taken by Jesus in his life and teaching. The very possibility of a mission to the world at all was involved in the meaning of his life and death, of his mission, and of the Kingdom of God: it was essential that these ideas should sink so deeply into the souls of the disciples that Jesus might feel satisfied that in them he had messengers who would carry the good news far and wide.

[17] Mark 8:27-31.
[18] Mark 8:31.
[19] Luke 12:50.

We are able to understand now a little better why Jesus did not undertake a mission to the Gentiles. He had a preliminary task of supreme importance on which everything else depended. The basic facts of our faith are most intimately bound up with what Jesus taught about the nature of the kingdom and with his life, death, and resurrection; and it was on these that his mind was primarily bent. There are many things we should like to know about him, his teaching, and his outlook on life, but the gospel narrative is very short and does not give us much enlightenment. But of one thing these writers make sure, that we should not miss the story of the passion, the supreme deed of God in human history, when he entered into the stream of human life in the person of his Son and through his death and resurrection acted in a final and effective way for man's salvation. All other considerations are secondary, and we are profoundly thankful that this record is at our disposal and that it is clear and unmistakable.

And now the question must be faced even more directly. What was Jesus' attitude toward the expansion of the movement he had inaugurated? Against the background of the thoughts which must have been in his mind, coming, as we have seen, from the prophetic and apocalyptic writings and from the missionary movement of the Jewish community, it is difficult to think that he did not contemplate the carrying of his gospel to the Gentiles; but can this be confirmed by words which undubitably came from his own lips? Unfortunately the evidence is confusing and contradictory. We have on the one hand the familiar words of the Great Commission as found in Mark and Matthew. The shorter version is in Mark; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." [20] The difficulty here is that the last chapter of Mark, from verse 9 to the end, does not belong to the Gospel in its original form. What we find in our versions, to use the words of James Moffatt, is one of two "second century attempts to complete the gospel." [21] So this cannot be used as a direct quotation from Jesus.

The Great Commission in Matthew is longer; "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make

[20] Mark 16:15.
[21] *The New Testament, a New Translation,* note *in loco.*

disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."[22] These words are exceedingly important, and ample use will be made of them in a succeeding chapter; but the question is: Are they to be attributed to Jesus? It is possible and even probable that he pointed out to his disciples on some occasion of which we have no record something of the wideness of his thought, but there are several weighty reasons for questioning these words as coming from Jesus himself. The disciples were told to use the trinitarian formula when they baptized, but on no occasion in the New Testament is baptism administered according to this form of words; it is always in the name of Jesus alone. This would scarcely have been the form used had Jesus given them a distinct command to use the fuller formula. Besides that, the attitude of the disciples towards the mission to the Gentiles is very difficult to understand if Jesus had made it as clear as the words under discussion would indicate. What their attitude was, is of such importance that it must be considered carefully in the following chapter; but this much can be stated here, that they did not understand at the first what they were commissioned to do, if their actions are compared with what Jesus is said here to have laid upon them as their task.

However, other difficulties emerge. We may be able with some satisfaction to interpret the limitation laid upon the disciples when they were sent out two by two on a preaching tour by Jesus. It was a part of their training and consequently not a complete program, it might be said. His words were: "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel .... verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."[23] But the limits of satisfactory interpretation are reached when we read further: "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[24] What are we to do with sayings like these? We surely must not evade

[22] Matt. 28:18-20.
[23] Matt. 10:5-6, 23.
[24] Matt. 15:24.

them. According to the form criticism now so widely used by scholars, many of the so-called sayings of Jesus were not his at all but embody the thought of the Early Church and were placed by later writers on the lips of Jesus, years after his death and resurrection. Here, however, that method of dealing with his words does not offer the help we need, for we cannot imagine the church putting these words in Jesus' mouth when the mission to the Gentiles was in full swing. If they were indeed put into his mouth, they must embody a very early tradition formed in a group which had no awareness of the Master's world mission. So far as the light we now have is concerned, we are baffled. On their face these limiting sayings picture Jesus as one possessed by the apocalpytic outlook, who not only thought of his kingdom as about to appear at once but also shared the narrow, particularistic views of the party among the Jews who opposed the world mission and who thought of God's kingdom as intended for them alone.

The confusion is not lightened but is actually heightened when we find in this same Gospel of Matthew other sayings which are in direct contradiction to those we have been considering. A succinct summary is provided by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick:[25]

On the other side, the universalistic prophecy, "In his name shall the Gentiles hope," is applied to Jesus;[26] the parable of the husbandman teaches the substitution of the Gentile church for rejected Israel;[27] love to all men is presented as true imitation of the Father;[28] terrific denunciation is visited on Jewish leaders[29] and cordial praise is bestowed on a Roman centurion;[30] Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, pagan cities, are to be preferred in the judgment before Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum;[31] when the Kingdom arrives "many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob," while "the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness";[32] at the judgment "shall be gathered all the nations";[33] and in the meantime, the

[25] *Op. cit.*, pp. 145-46
[26] Matt. 12:15-21.
[27] Matt. 21:33-43.
[28] Matt. 5:43-48.
[29] Matt. 23:1 ff.
[30] Matt. 8:5-10.
[31] Matt. 11:21-24.
[32] Matt. 8:11, 12.
[33] Matt. 25:31 ff.

Christian mission is world-wide and inclusive—"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." [34]

How great must have been the difference of opinion about the mission of Jesus among those who were responsible for the several strands of the narrative which were finally united in the first of our gospels! We cannot solve the problem; it may be that it will never be solved. Suffice it to say that the Early Church came soon to think of Jesus as more than the Savior of the Jews; he was for them the Redeemer of men, of all men, Jews and Gentiles alike. It would have been difficult if not impossible for them enthusiastically to have reached this conclusion had they not been able to trace back some such thoughts to the very time of Jesus and to remember words which came from his lips justifying them in the momentous step they had taken in proclaiming his gospel as a message for all men.

In view of the kind of evidence we have, Adolf Harnack can go only so far as to say that there was an "implicit universalism" in Jesus' sayings. Jesus, Harnack says, "shattered Judaism, and brought out the kernel of the religion of Israel. Thereby—i.e. by his preaching of God as the Father, *and by his own death*—he founded the universal religion." [35] He does not believe that Jesus issued the Great Commission, which was "appropriately put into his mouth" at a later time. Dr. Ernest F. Scott occupies about the same position when he declares that the religion of Jesus was "inherently universal"; it "could not but break through all national barriers and find its way to all men, as water rises to its level. . . . . The Christian message was incompatible with any kind of national restriction." [36] But the question is bound to arise: Must not a universalism so "implicit" and so "inherent" in the message of Jesus have been more or less explicitly in his mind and purpose?

We believe there are indications beyond those already considered which will help to find the clue to Jesus' fundamental attitude. One is the significant fact that the teaching of Jesus—as, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount and in the parables of the kingdom—is so fitted

[34] Matt. 28:19.
[35] *Op. cit.*, I, 43.
[36] *The Nature of the Early Church*, p. 204.

to the needs of all men that by what might be called an inevitability it registers itself in the thought of men as a definitive revelation of God to humankind. As is true of no other teaching and of no other religious founder, the words of Jesus and his life and example are being proved to be of universal validity. The Lord's Prayer is not Jewish only; it is for all. The parable of the Good Samaritan holds up a despised Samaritan as a model as compared with a Jewish priest and a Levite. It is more natural to interpret the parables of the kingdom as inclusive of all mankind than of Jewish people alone. Other signs point in the same direction. Jesus was very decidedly breaking through the particularism of his own people when he treated men, as he always did, as men and not as Jews. The conclusion must be that, with all the difficulties that are to be faced, the undoubted tendency of his thought was wide and not narrow, more fitted to reach out to those on the outside than to be confined to people of his own race. Jesus is more widely recognized today as "universal man" than at any time in the past. Could this be possible on any other basis than that the quality of his life and character, the temper of his teaching, and the breadth of his attitude are accurately gauged as those of one who did not and could not limit his outlook to his own people? So, despite the contraditions, it seems more reasonable to conclude that the sayings which have a universal outlook characterize Jesus rather than those which would limit him to the narrow bounds of Judaism.

Finally, what was the verdict of the Early Church? We have already seen what conclusion they reached in the commission to the world incorporated in the Gospels, particularly Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But there is still another Gospel, written probably several decades after the first three, the Gospel of John. We cannot be sure who the writer was, but we know that he was one of the most spiritually minded of the followers of Jesus. This devoted disciple had long brooded over the memory of the Master, and he wrote down in his own words the meaning which Jesus had come to have for him. He interpreted his Lord in the light of all the memories and traditions which had come down through the years since Jesus had walked in Galilee and Jerusalem and also in the light of what Jesus had come to mean in the life of the expanding church. It is highly significant that

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this Gospel, as Adolf Harnack puts it, "is saturated with statements of a directly universalistic character."[37] From the very beginning Jesus is presented as having a world outlook. John the Baptist proclaims, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!"[38] In the conversation with Nicodemus occurs what is doubtless the best-known and most deeply loved verse in the Bible: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."[39] Again, we find Jesus talking with the woman of Samaria and making a declaration which has been called the "charter of universal worship"; "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth."[40] In the discourse on the Good Shepherd we hear Jesus saying, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."[41] One final quotation among many may be given; "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."[42]

Such was the thought of John, and he voices our conviction today. Jesus so spoke and so acted that he created and continues to create the inalienable conviction that he came to be the Savior of all men, Jew and Gentile alike, and that we are loyal to him only when we follow him in proclaiming a kingdom that is without frontiers.

[37] *Op. cit.*, I, 42.
[38] John 1:29.
[39] John 3:16.
[40] John 4:21, 23.
[41] John 10:16.
[42] John 12:32.

Chapter IV

THE EXPANDING VISION OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, BOTH BY THE same author, overlap each other. The Gospel closes with an account of the ascension of Jesus, which is preceded by the statement that the name of Jesus would be carried "unto all the nations" and that the disciples were to be "witnesses of these things."[1] The Acts also gives an account of the ascension, preceded by the injunction to remain in Jerusalem and "wait for the promise of the Father,"[2] and also by a revealing conversation between the disciples and Jesus. They came to him with the question, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"[3] which indicates that they were Jews, in the Jewish tradition, looking upon themselves as belonging to the chosen people for whom the Kingdom of God was intended. We must understand their viewpoint as sympathetically as possible. Their background was the same as that which has been described as the background of Jesus. They were familiar with the presence of Gentile proselytes in the Jewish community, and the thought that Gentiles might be members of their fellowship would have seemed perfectly natural. But the thought that they could be anything but loyal Jews would not occur to them. It was taken for granted that the only way for a Gentile to become a follower of Jesus was to become a Jewish proselyte first. That was the real problem which confronted the Early Church—to find a way around this obstacle.

The primitive Christian fellowship, then, stood just where Judaism, of which it still felt itself to be a part, had taken its stand. Christianity was to these men and women an integral part of Judaism. It had not occurred to them that there would be a separation, that the

[1] Luke 24:47-48.
[2] Acts 1:4.
[3] Acts 1:6.

ties which bound them to their ancestral faith would have to be severed. There was, of course, one difference, which ultimately would make necessary a parting of the ways. The Christian Jews were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, while the other Jews were not. This simple statement conveys the essential difference between the two parties and is of the greatest importance. The attitude towards Jesus still remains the fundamental line of cleavage between Christians and Jews. But before the early Jewish Christians realized the full meaning of Jesus and their relation to him, they were held by their old Jewish exclusiveness. This bound them so firmly that it was only with great difficulty that it could be thrown off. At least two deeply moving experiences were necessary to begin the transformation which in the end made them into very different men and women.

These experiences were the realization that Jesus had risen from the dead and the enduement with power which came to them in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. The difficult problems connected with the accounts of the resurrection and the appearances of Jesus need not detain us in this study. The overwhelming fact of which this little community was vividly conscious was that their Master Jesus Christ, the one with whom they had journeyed in Galilee, the one who had been crucified and was dead and buried, was alive, "whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."[4] The message of this transformed group very naturally became "Jesus and the resurrection." It was the living Christ, with whom they might have fellowship through the Spirit, who became for them the most real fact in their experience. There is no other way of accounting for the Christian world mission than by asserting the reality of this experience. It was not only what he had said and done but what he was, the Son of God endued with all power and bringing them into effective contact with the eternal source of all life, the living God himself. All this and more the resurrection meant to them, not all at once, but as its meaning

[4] Acts 2:24.

penetrated more deeply into their consciousness and confirmed the genuineness of their first vivid experience.

These disciples also had need of the enabling power which became theirs in the experience of the Day of Pentecost. We are told that they were "all together in one place." Then there came "a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, ... And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." [5]

We can explain what took place only partially. It would be interesting, but it might not add much to our understanding, if we had a moving picture film of the upper room during those moments and a phonograph record of the words which were uttered. Spiritual experiences like this are baffling and ever after contain an element of mystery even to those who have passed through them. What we do know and can be certain of is that these men and women came out of the upper room deeply and permanently affected by what had taken place. There was a vivid sense of the reality of something new and strange, accompanied by a depth of conviction they had not known before. It had done something to them which forever made them different. They were possessed with a dynamic which made them bold and fearless as they went out to face opposition and hatred, suffering and death in the name of their risen Lord. Yes, they now had a message and a dynamic which were sufficient for their need.

The first occasion for presenting their message came at once.[6] We are told that a "multitude came together" and when they had calmed down sufficiently for a speaker to be heard, "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them." He told them of "Jesus of Nazareth," "a man approved of God . . . . whom God raised up," who was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and declared "that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Our special interest lies in the question: To whom was this first Christian sermon preached? When the long list of countries from which his hearers came is read it would seem

[5] Acts 2:1-4.
[6] Acts 2:5-36.

that it was literally the beginning of making "disciples of all the nations." But an examination of the record shows that it was delivered to Jews and proselytes and to them only, and that Peter was not going a step farther than a non-Christian Jewish missionary would have gone in preaching his message through the synagogue. Here are the words: "Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. . . . . Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome," and then the record adds, "both Jews and proselytes." They were not outsiders, but those who had come up for religious or other purposes to Jerusalem, all of them included by orthodox Jews as belonging to their community. Peter calls out to this audience, "Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem," and again, "Ye men of Israel." He speaks of them as "brethren," very evidently brethren in Judaism, and makes his final appeal to "all the house of Israel." Since the days of the prophets of universalism and especially since the time when a part of the people at least had taken their words to heart, it could not be seriously doubted that Gentiles could come into the circle of Judaism. Peter was going as far as that but no farther. He had yet a long distance to travel, as we shall see, before he could break through his religious scruples and accept Gentiles on an equality with himself before God.

This sense of racial superiority soon showed itself in the life of the little growing community. We are told that "there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."[7] What does this mean? "The murmuring had a natural source in the jealousy between the *Hebrews* or *Jews* born and bred in the Holy Land, and the *Grecian Jews* or *Hellenists,* i.e., Greek-speaking Jews of foreign origin."[8] And this favoritism, coming out of the old sense of superiority on the part of the dyed-in-the-wool Jews of Judaea, was present in the Christian

[7] Acts 6:1.

[8] Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles* (2nd ed.), p. 83.

Church, raising its ugly head in the daily distribution of food to the poor widows among the new members. Even the Christian born in Judaea felt himself superior to the Christian coming from a Gentile city. He had not surmounted racial pride even though he was a follower of Jesus. The old bonds were very, very hard to break. What did the apostles do when this reached their ears? After a conference with the whole body of believers they appointed seven deacons to be in charge of poor relief. Read their names: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaüs. There is not a Hebrew name in the list. Too much must not be made of this, for Greek names were not uncommon among Jews, but it is a striking fact that all of them should be Greek. As A. W. F. Blunt suggests, "They are plainly chosen in the Hellenist interest";[9] and it is expressly stated that one of them, Nicolaüs, was "a proselyte of Antioch."[10] The revealing incident serves to show how difficult it was for these early Christians to shed their provincialism and look upon all men as brethren, no matter what their origin or race.

Turning now to the eighth chapter of Acts, we come to two incidents closely connected and shedding light on the growth of a more liberal attitude. When persecution broke out against the church, after the stoning of Stephen, its members were "scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."[11] "And Philip [one of the seven newly appointed deacons] went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ."[12] We are told that "the multitudes gave heed with one accord."[13] Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard of Philip's mission and its success, they sent Peter and John to investigate. It was not easy, to put it mildly, for a Jew at that time to receive a Samaritan as a fellow believer. The Samaritans had Jewish blood in their veins, but they were despised because they were a mixed race. But Peter and John seemed to be so fully convinced that the mission was of God that they co-operated

[9] *The Acts,* in "The Clarendon Bible," p. 160.
[10] Acts 6:5.
[11] Acts 8:1.
[12] Acts 8:5.
[13] Acts 8:6.

fully and were so won over that on their way back to Jerusalem they "preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans." [14]

Philip, however, was to take a further step. We have it in the fascinating story of the conversion and baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch. An orthodox Jewish Christian would have objected to what Philip did because the Ethiopian was not a proselyte; he could not become one because he was a mutilated eunuch and as such could not "enter into the assembly of Jehovah." [15] True, a more lenient attitude is indicated in the latter part of Isaiah;[16] but the prohibition was imbedded in the Law, the most sacred part of the Scriptures, and could not readily be laid aside. The fact is, it must have appeared as a new step; for the divine guidance is given several times over, as if to assure Philip that what he was doing was of God.[17]

While these experiences seem important enough to be recounted by Luke, they do not compare in significance with the experience of Peter and Cornelius the centurion. It occupies the whole of the tenth chapter of the Acts and a considerable part of the eleventh, the part of the incident which carries its deepest meaning being repeated three times. It gives the account of what took place in Peter's mind when faced with a Gentile who was not a proselyte but was in the class of the "God-fearing," one who had accepted the God of Israel and was guiding his life in accordance with the moral law of the Old Testament. Peter had a vision of a sheet let down from heaven containing all kinds of animals, which he was told to "kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean." [18] Here was Peter, a Christian and yet a Jew, who needed a deeply moving experience to overcome his prejudice against Gentiles. The entire story must be read to enter into its full meaning. He was convinced, however, by the evident leadership of the Spirit, both in his own case and in that of Cornelius, and he "opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no re-

[14] Acts 8:25.
[15] Deut. 23:1.
[16] Isa. 56:4-5.
[17] Acts 8:26-40.
[18] Acts 10:13-14.

specter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."[19] It was so remarkable that when "the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word," those who had come with Peter "were amazed, ... because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit."[20] But when those in Jerusalem heard of what had taken place and of what Peter had done, they "contended with him saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."[21] He defended himself well, rehearsing all that had happened, and closed with these splendid words: "If then God gave unto them the like gift, as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?"[22] The story closes with the effect produced by his defense, which shows how new and surprising a step it was: "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."[23]

The scene in the Acts now shifts from Jerusalem and Palestine to Antioch. The persecution that followed Stephen's martyrdom carried Philip to Samaria and others to Phoenicia and the island of Cyprus. "But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus."[24] Who were these Greeks? It is not an easy question. Not only do the ancient manuscripts differ, but there is no unanimity among scholars. However, we have ample justification for the following interpretation. The marginal reading is "Grecian Jews," which is quite different and difficult to accept. *Greeks* were Gentiles, while *Grecian Jews* were Jews—Greek-speaking and in many cases, like Paul, not residents of Palestine. To say that the evangelists in Antioch preached to Grecian Jews would have no point: they were looked upon as Jews and no question could be raised as to their standing, except that the Judaean Jews thought of themselves as superior to

[19] Acts 10:34-35.
[20] Acts 10:44-45.
[21] Acts 11:2-3.
[22] Acts 11:17.
[23] Acts 11:18.
[24] Acts 11:20.

their brethren of the Dispersion in other lands. But did they preach to Greeks, not proselytes but complete outsiders? If they did, there is little point in the account of Paul's first missionary journey, during which, as we shall see, a step forward was taken which would not have been a new step at all if earlier at Antioch the evangelists had preached to Greeks unconnected with the synagogue. What is probably meant here is that Greek Gentiles who were of the "God-fearing" class and had some connection with the synagogue were among those who first heard the gospel at Antioch.

It is here at Antioch that Paul appears upon the scene after a period of retirement at his home in Tarsus.[25] His importance is so great that from this point on he dominates the action. Fuller consideration of his missionary activity and principles will be taken up in the following chapter.

Antioch was the first truly missionary church; it is interesting that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."[26] How it began its career as a missionary church is clearly shown in the account of the sending out of the first missionaries:

> Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.[27]

This tells its own story. It was a definite commissioning of missionaries by a church which looked on them at its representatives, as we shall see when they returned and reported to the church what had befallen them. The one thing in their first missionary journey to which we must give our attention here is the new step which is recorded. It took place at Antioch in Pisidia in Asia Minor, where Paul preached in "the synagogue on the sabbath day." After this

[25] Acts 11:25-26.
[26] Acts 11:26.
[27] Acts 13:1-3.

sermon, on "the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God." [28] The sight of the large numbers of Gentiles who came to hear the gospel angered the Jews; "they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed." [29] Then came the decisive step. "And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." [30] That is, they went out and proclaimed the gospel to Gentiles having no connection with the synagogue. The newness of this step becomes the more apparent in the sequel when they returned to their home base: "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles." [31] They had gone outside the synagogue and had preached the gospel irrespective of the connection of their hearers with Judaism.

They had taken the final step; now they must defend their audacity. They had precipitated a crisis in which exceedingly serious issues were involved. It was now necessary to decide whether the Christian community should step out as a universal, world-embracing church with no restrictions to its expansion or remain attached to Judaism, carrying the gospel over the empire, to be sure, but always bound down within the narrow limits of Jewish nationalism. Was it to be an independent, unshackled Christian Church or merely a Jewish party or sect? The emergency was not long to wait. While Paul and Barnabas were tarrying in Antioch, "certain men came down from Judaea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." [32] The challenge was at once accepted, and "Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them." [33] It was decided to refer the matter to the "apostles and elders" in Jerusalem, for the church in Jerusalem was

[28] Acts 13:44.
[29] Acts 13:45.
[30] Acts 13:46.
[31] Acts 14:27.
[32] Acts 15:1.
[33] Acts 15:2.

revered as the mother church. This resulted in the holding of the so-called "First General Council of the Christian Church." The question before them was clearly stated. Paul and Barnabas "rehearsed all things that God had done with them," [34] including of course the conversion of the Gentiles. "But there arose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses." [35] A long discussion followed during which Paul and his companion recounted again "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles." [36] Peter now ardently threw the weight of his influence on their side, and finally James, the head of the church, said the deciding word.

"Everything turned upon his utterance. . . . . As James the Just he represented in particular the ideal of the Hebraic party, and if anyone was to win them to the acceptance of the Gentiles it would be he."[37] We must realize the situation. The majority of the council were of the Hebraic party. They must not be scandalized, but at the same time the main issue must be faced and a decision rendered. And so it was. James declared: "Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath." [38]

Much has been written about these injunctions which does not concern us here. We must note, however, that the main point, about which the controversy had arisen and which was the reason for the calling of the council, was settled—it was not necessary for Gentiles who became Christians to come into the Christian fellowship through the doors of Judaism. The gospel could now be preached directly to Gentiles, and they could become members of the church directly by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and being baptized. Christianity

[34] Acts 15:4.
[35] Acts 15:5.
[36] Acts 15:12.
[37] Rackham, *op. cit.*, p. 253.
[38] Acts 15:19-21.

could now begin its career as an independent body, not feeling itself bound to Judaism and the requirements of the Jewish law.

But what of the injunctions to abstain from "pollutions of idols," "fornication," "what is strangled," and "blood"? On the count of "fornication" the new church was to be just as strenuous as Judaism. With respect to the other items the Gentile Christians were asked to abstain from things about which they might have little or no conviction but which would scandalize their Jewish brethren in the church. These concessions were accepted by Paul, who saw that when the main issue had been decided, these other items were matters of relative unimportance. The decision was incorporated in a letter which was sent by two special commissioners who, together with Paul and Barnabas, conveyed it to "the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." [39] The letter was received with great rejoicing. "So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation." [40]

Thus ended, officially at least, the first serious issue which had arisen in the Christian movement. Paul saw clearly the wide-reaching significance of the decision, but it is very doubtful if the others who were present realized that a major issue had been met and settled. Within a few years it had ceased to be real. The Jew was no longer in the majority; in fact, he soon became an insignificant minority with little to say about the policies of the rapidly growing church. The Gentile assumed the ascendency and would be likely to take it almost for granted that he was as much a member of the church as any other. But when the issue arose it was crucial, and much depended upon the decision that was reached. So we honor the men who, with Paul, had the insight, and were bold enough, to come to a decision against the tradition which had been revered by their people through the centuries. While this particular issue is dead and cannot rise again, the

[39] Acts 15:22-23.

[40] Acts 15:30-31. No attempt has been made to use any of the emendations of the account of the council as found in the Acts. They are conjectural and do not change the nature of the fundamental problem faced by the early church.

principle at stake is most important and is ever before us. We must always bear in mind that "the word of God is not bound."[41] Men are attempting to bind the gospel of Christ today, attaching it to national policy and making it the servant of material aims. There are those who would make the religion of Christ fit into their conception of race or party or denomination and thus bind it down within narrow limits. To all these the Jerusalem Council and its decision has its message. The gospel of Christ is free; it is independent of any extraneous influence which would deflect it from its course. In Paul's own words, "Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."[42]

The victory had been won, once and for all. But that did not mean that it was accepted by all. For years a group known as Judaizers continued to trouble the church, insisting that circumcision and other Mosaic requirements were to be dutifully followed by Gentile Christians. We find the controversy agitating the churches in Paul's epistles, especially Galatians and Romans, where he is unsparing in his denunciation of these intruders. He is very clear in asserting the freedom of the Christian gospel as it reaches men everywhere with no relation to national or racial limitations. And when once the gospel had shaken itself free from its shackles, it spread rapidly among the Gentiles. Instead of a corresponding movement toward the Christian viewpoint among the Jews, their interest in the gospel waned, so that, as has already been indicated, by the time of the great catastrophe which befell the Jewish people very few Jews were to be found in the Christian church. It was a Gentile church in membership and in outlook, and never again was it to have a Jewish complexion, except, of course, as it is based on the Hebrew Scriptures and on the foundation laid by the early disciples and writers of the New Testament. And, above all, we can never forget that Jesus Christ was of the Jewish race, the fulfillment of Old Testament expectations, and the inaugurator of the Kingdom of God.

It is pathetic beyond measure that this wonderful race should have been severed from the Christian movement. It is also sad to think

[41] II Tim. 2:9.
[42] II Cor. 3:17.

that the Christian Church should have neglected the Jew, seemingly not recognizing its responsibility to include him within the scope of its expanding missionary program—that is, not until comparatively recent years. During the last century the church, in the person of a few devoted men and women, began to be troubled, and today there are missions to Jews wherever they are to be found in numbers large enough to justify an organized movement. The results have gone beyond those in many of the great mission fields of the church, and converts from Judaism are to be found everywhere. They have entered the ministry of various churches and rejoice to declare the gospel of Jesus the Christ, "the anointed one of Israel" as well as the "light to lighten the Gentiles." They are the earnest of our expectation that the church will increasingly recognize its duty and that the synagogue will again hear the message of a modern Paul or Barnabas calling its people to repentance in the name of Jesus Christ, their Savior and ours.

Chapter V

PAUL THE MISSIONARY

"Paul the missionary" and "paul the apostle" mean the same thing, "one sent," the first from the Latin and the second from the Greek. In making a study of Paul in this volume our particular aim must be kept constantly in view. It is not to make a survey of his life and letters, or to estimate his character, or to evaluate his teachings, but to discover his relation to the missionary enterprise of the Christian Church. We turn first to the geographical side of this relationship.

In one of the three accounts of his conversion given in the Acts, Paul connects his missionary purpose with his original call to be a disciple of Jesus. This, the longest account of the call, speaks of "the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee."[1] It adds, in the words of Paul, "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."[2] Paul goes on to refer briefly to the events in his career, bringing out the fact that he had preached to both Jews and Gentiles. The call to missionary activity was, in Paul's mind, involved in his experience on the Damascus road. This was his real commissioning to missionary service. It soon became evident that for him to be a follower of Christ meant to carry the gospel far and wide in the empire. We shall see later how deeply this conviction entered into all his thinking. The constraint of the love of God in Christ for every man became the central and dominating priciple in all he did.

We have already referred to the account of the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas by the church in Antioch. They went first to the island of Cyprus; it may be because it was Barnabas' home. There they came into the presence of Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, "a man of understanding"[3] we are told. Here a very significant double change is recorded. Paul began to be called by that name

[1] Acts 26:17; but see the whole account in vss. 14-18.
[2] Acts 26:19.
[3] Acts 13:7.

instead of the name heretofore used, Saul. It was a change from a Hebrew to a Greek name. It is quite possible that, living outside Palestine and mingling with Greek-speaking people, his parents had given him both names. He had been called Saul among his own people, and it is the name used up to this point in the Acts; but now there is a change, very simply recorded—"Saul, who is also called Paul."[4] From this time without deviation that name is used of the great Apostle. We do not know why the change was made. We have, however, a very striking suggestion made by Sir William Ramsay, that the reason may have been that it was the first time Paul had ever stood before an important Roman official. To him Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, became the embodiment of the empire itself, and as he stood there the idea flashed through his mind that the gospel which he was proclaiming was to extend as far as the empire before whose representative he stood.[5] At once the name of the missionary is changed. His Hebrew name, which connected him with his own race only, was left to one side, and his Greek name became the designation by which he was to be known. It related him more closely to that wider world represented by the Greek language and culture, which were known to the very bounds of the empire. And in addition, another change takes place. Up until this moment it had been "Barnabas and Saul," as if Barnabas had been the leader, the more prominent of the two. From now on—with only one exception, at the Jerusalem Council[6]—it is always "Paul and Barnabas." Something occurred which placed him in the lead. Paul steps out as the commanding personality which he was, and which he was proved to be many times over in the sequel. Barnabas must not be discounted; it is said of him that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith";[7] but he had limitations and could not be compared with the imperial-minded Paul.

The records in Acts and in his letters would indicate that Paul had a definite strategy, partly conscious and partly coming unconsciously

[4] Acts 13:9.
[5] *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen,* pp. 81-88.
[6] Acts 15:12.
[7] Acts 11:24.

out of his background and upbringing. He was pre-eminently a city preacher. This does not mean that he did not go to villages away from the cities. Ramsay holds that we should translate Acts 13:6, "made a missionary progress through the whole island," which implies stopping along the way at the villages and towns, much as a modern missionary "itinerates." But Paul always seems to have had his eye on the city ahead to which his journey would lead. His strategy would appear to have been that if the gospel should be planted securely in a city, the country and the villages around would also hear its message. It may have been more or less unconscious, but it was a sure instinct. We must always remember that Paul was a city man. In this he was unlike Jesus. His figures of speech and his references are taken from city life and not from the countryside as was pre-eminently the case with Jesus. Many cities are mentioned in the Acts and in his letters—Antioch (in Syria and in Pisidia), Lystra, Iconium, Derbe, Troas, Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Rome, not to mention others. It was in these cities that the surging life of the empire came to its focus, and it was there Paul wanted to be.

Paul felt a great, compelling impulse to traverse the whole world, which for him meant the Roman Empire. In one of his infrequent references to his travels he says: "So that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation."[8] That is, he had gone from one end to the other of the distinctively Greek world, from Palestine to the upper Adriatic Sea. It is well known that he went to Rome and, according to tradition, was martyred there. He planned to go to Spain, but we cannot tell whether he was able to make the journey to the western Mediterranean or not.[9] The fact is, we know very little about his travels. This comes out in one passage where he tells of many experiences which are not even alluded to elsewhere and for which a place cannot be found in his known travels. His own words are vivid:

[8] Rom. 15:19-20.
[9] Rom. 15:24.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.[10]

Here is a record of adventures scarcely to be paralleled in all the annals of missionary heroism.

The sources inform us that Paul's travels carried him over the northern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, but so far as we know, not to Africa. There is not a hint that he ever visited the great North African cities of Alexandria in the east and Carthage in the west. We do not know why. So far as Alexandria is concerned, we have the record that Jews were being persecuted in a bloody pogrom in A.D. 38, and in 41 there was an "imperial prohibition of entry of Syrian Jews into that city."[11] Deissmann adds, "Thus Paul had no open door."

But while Paul thus traveled widely in the Mediterranean basin, the center of his activity was the Greek world on both sides of the Aegean Sea. The cities which were headquarters for Paul were Corinth on the west side and Ephesus on the east. This gives a somewhat different meaning to the "Macedonian call" than is often given. We are told that when he was in Troas, "a vision appeared to Paul in the night: there was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."[12] Usually this in interpreted as a call to leave Asia and begin work in Europe, and of course that is what it was as we think of the divisions between the continents today. They had no meaning, however, in the geography of that day. Europe was not known as such at all, and Asia was a province in the western part of Asia Minor bordering on the Aegean. This call was not a summons into a new continent; it was

[10] II Cor. 11:25-28.
[11] Deissmann, *Paul*, pp. 230 f., n. 8.
[12] Acts 16:9.

a summons into a different world. Paul had been working in the highlands of Asia Minor, far removed from the cultured centers of Greek life, and now he was called into its very midst. Here he was to do his most typical work; here he was to have his greatest success.

The Greek world of that day lay on both sides of the Aegean. We ordinarily think of its center as being in the west, where Athens and Corinth were located; and we are right, provided we do not forget that there was also a Greek civilization in the east. There was Ephesus, and there were the other cities to which the letters in the early chapters of the Apocalypse were addressed—Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea—all centers of Greek culture. Paul afterward worked on this side of the Aegean, but not at first. It was to the cities of the west that Paul was called as he saw his vision in Troas. Its significance is attested by the care with which the leadership of the Spirit is emphasized in making the new move. Paul took this step confident that God was directing him. He and his companions were "forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; . . . . they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not."[13] Then it was that the vision of the man of Macedonia appeared to Paul, and we have the revealing testimony: "And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them."[14]

They "concluded" that they were not to go east but west. Suppose they had gone east, as Alexander had done only a little more than three centuries before. What a difference in the history of Christianity; what a difference in the history of the Western World! Is it going too far to imagine that Persia and India might have been the sphere of Paul's missionary activities and that these lands, become Christian, might even now be devising plans to bring the West under the influence of the gospel? The story which did actually unfold was just as strange and unpredictable. Yet when Paul came to the conclusion that the spirit of Jesus was pointing to the west, across the Aegean Sea toward Greece, the whole drama of European history

[13] Acts 16:6-7.
[14] Acts 16:10.

spread out before him—an unforeseen drama which was opened by the little, insignificant missionary who came upon the stage and began to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Greeks, and finally reached Rome, the center of the ancient world.

The Acts of the Apostles closes with Paul a prisoner in Rome. That, according to Harnack, is the purpose of the book. Paul is Luke's hero. He sets the stage for his appearance and allows him to dominate the scene. The last half of the book might well be named the Acts of the Apostle Paul. But it was not a life, nor even a memoir of Paul, Luke set himself to write. What Luke had in mind was primarily what might be called a study in missionary strategy. He finds Christianity a little weak body of men and women in a small and despised provincial capital, Jerusalem, and tells the tale of its spread westward until it reaches the center of power and influence, the Eternal City on the Tiber, Rome. Having done that, Luke is satisfied. He seems to feel that when he has told how the gospel has been established at the center of the world and in the person of its most effective representative, he has done enough. With the new religion planted in Rome it was only a question of time when it would reach out to the very fringes of the empire. "All roads lead to Rome"; it is equally true that all roads lead away from Rome to the faraway borders, and on these roads the gospel will travel until, in less than a short three hundred years, the Roman eagles would be under the sign of the cross. How much we would like to know about Paul after his imprisonment. Was he released? Where did he go? Was he able to carry out his purpose to visit Spain? These and a score of other questions spring into the front of one's mind, and there is no answer. We must be satisfied with a fact of great historical and missionary significance—the gospel had reached Rome.

Being a missionary meant more for Paul than going with the gospel to those who had not heard it. It was something more intimate, an attitude of mind and heart which changed his whole outlook on life and gave direction to all his thinking. This brings us, then, to the second part of our subject, the meaning of missions in Paul's thought-life and experience. The first thing to do is to secure the right perspective. Paul was not first a theologian, as has so often been tacitly

assumed, but a Christian. Then he was a missionary and a theologian; and yet, of course, he was all three in one. It was out of his life as a follower of the Lord Jesus and his experience as a missionary that Paul came to the conclusions about God and man and sin and redemption which are incorporated in his epistles. They are missionary letters addressed to mission churches, intended to meet specific problems which had arisen in their new life. They are not formal theological treatises or homilies. The Epistle to the Romans answers the nearest to such a description; but even here we have a letter dominated by the purpose to encourage and guide and warn a young church, not yet visited, of the dangers which lay in its path.

So Paul is first of all a Christian, and that provides the clue to all else in his experience. In order to understand what his religion meant, the essential thing is to come to an understanding of his conversion experience. Paul was on his way to Damascus "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" and bearing letters from the high priest in Jerusalem, "that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, ... suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why presecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."[15] There are two other accounts,[16] one of which has already been referred to as including a call to the Gentiles. The most significant feature of this experience was that he had come into contact with Jesus, the one who had been crucified but was now alive and communicating with him. Paul was in touch with a living person, who ever after was to him the Lord Jesus Christ. He surrendered to him as Master and delighted to speak of himself as the bond servant, or slave, of Jesus Christ. It was the most important event in Paul's life and determined all that followed. He was Christocentric in all he taught and did from this time to the end. "The formula 'in Christ'

[15] Acts 9:1-6.

[16] Acts 22:6-10 and 26:12-18.

(or 'in the Lord') occurs 164 times in Paul's writings."[17] Paul speaks of the experience in the well-known words, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."[18] The union is so close that he can write: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me."[19] Paul had not been a bad man, nor an irreligious man; but now he began to live his life from a new center, with a new dynamic, and a living presence always with him.

With this relation always in the background of our thinking we may take another step into Paul's attitude. He began to see men in a totally different light. Every man was to him one "for whom Christ died."[20] He had learned that "there is no respect of persons with God."[21] All men were sinners; he had "laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin."[22] But they were all likewise the objects of God's grace. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."[23] For was it not true "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,"[24] and that it was the whole world that was thus to be reconciled? We must realize how all-embracing was Paul's new attitude: "There can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus."[25] Likewise, "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all."[26]

Paul came to know the meaning of a most wonderful word, love. He used it over and over again; it became his theme song. "But

[17] Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 140. He speaks of it as "Christ-intimacy," p. 135.
[18] II Cor. 5:17.
[19] Gal. 2:20.
[20] Rom. 14:15.
[21] Rom. 2:11.
[22] Rom. 3:9; see also 3:10.
[23] Rom. 1:16.
[24] II Cor. 5:19.
[25] Gal. 3:28.
[26] Col. 3:11.

God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[27] Finally he broke out in his great Psalm of Love, closing with the memorable words, "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."[28] We shall ever be grateful to Professor Anders Nygren, of Sweden, for his studies of the Greek words which we have translated "love." These words are *agape* and *eros*. The difference between them is wide and highly significant. Professor Nels Ferré says, "In succinct sections, Nygren then defines *agape* as spontaneous, unmotivated, value-indifferent, creative love productive of fellowship. *Agape* is entirely, unconditionally independent of the worth of its object."[29] This is the love of God of which Paul speaks. On the other hand, "*eros* can be defined as man's seeking of his highest good . . . . because it can improve him, help him to realize his best self, even because he thinks it leads him to God and thus to his highest good."[30] "The uniqueness of Christianity lies in its basic motif, in its picture of God as *agape*."[31] We must return to this point later, but it is of the highest importance to realize that the Apostle Paul had come through to the very center of the Christian gospel. That is the greatness of the man. He stands out in the vanguard of all the great Christian characters of the centuries. He was a Christian because God had laid his hand on him in Christ and saved him from his old self; he was a missionary because the God with whom he dealt in Christ was the God of love, who knew no distinction made by race or nationality or condition in life. This is far deeper than being a missionary because Jesus had issued a missionary command. Paul was a missionary because it was inevitably and immediately involved in being in contact with the kind of God who had revealed himself in Jesus Christ, a God of love who went out to seek and to save that which was lost.

But we cannot stop here. Paul himself goes further, giving a moving revelation of what it meant to him to be a missionary. It was much

[27] Rom. 5:8.
[28] I Cor. 13:13.
[29] *The Christian Fellowship*, p. 72.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

more than going here and there preaching the gospel. Something had to take place within himself which altered his attitude and changed his relations with those to whom he was sent. It is, of course, involved in what has already been said, but it comes out in a striking statement which probes to the depths of Paul's very being.

The statement is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians. By connecting Paul with this letter we commit ourselves to the genuineness of the letter as Pauline. Professor C. H. Dodd declares, "For whether the Epistle is by Paul or not, certainly *its thought is the crown of Paulinism*." [32] We take it as Pauline; it is difficult to see how anyone else could have penned words so in accord with Paul's thought and coming so directly out of his deepest experience. He is writing to Gentiles about their standing in the religion of Christ as contrasted with their previous condition:

> Ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition . . . . that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; . . . . for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father. So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.[33]

It is the classic statement of the truth that all people are one before God. Deissmann calls it "the Magna Charta of the idea of Christian Internationalism." [34]

Paul, however, was not satisfied. He goes back immediately over the same ground, but from a new angle and with deeper insight into what is really involved. He speaks of the new status of the Gentiles before God as a mystery or secret, which could not be made known in former times, but which, now that Christ had come, could be revealed. So completely foreign to the thinking of the Jew was the thought that

[32] *Abingdon Bible Commentary*, pp. 1224 f. Italics are Dodd's.
[33] Eph. 2:12-19.
[34] *Op. cit.*, p. 209.

the Gentiles might be placed on the same footing with the Chosen People that it could be understood and appropriated only when a new and striking revelation had been made of the character of God and his unbiased concern for men of every nation. We must realize that Paul is dealing here with something that goes farther and deeper than the insights of the prophets of universalism in the Old Testament. It was a secret, Paul says, which could not be made known to them. He states it thus: "The Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." [35] Only in the Revised Version is the meaning thus brought out. Other translations have attempted to tone down the awkwardness of the thrice-repeated word "fellow," but that is the exact wording of the Greek text. Jerome realized that his translation of the verse into Latin "makes an ugly sentence," but added, "it so stands in the Greek." [36] Paul is using the strongest language which he can command to drive home the thought that in status before God, in religious opportunity, and in relationship to one another, Jew and Gentile cannot be distinguished—they are "fellows" together.[37] It is the *togetherness* upon which emphasis is placed in language which cannot be mistaken.

Professor C. H. Dodd declares that "Paul the Jew had to suffer the shattering of his deepest beliefs before he came through to a new conception of a missionary's work." [38] But wherein was this position different from that of the prophets of universalism? Had they not seen in vision the day when the knowledge of Jehovah would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea? What more could be asked for? For Paul there was much to be desired. What the prophets saw was a world worshiping Jehovah, but a world recognizing the unique position of the Chosen People, and it was at this point that Paul had his inner struggle. He was a missionary of the grace of God, but there was also present the deep-rooted temptation to retain his racial pride, his sense of belonging to a people which could justifiably hold

[35] Eph. 3:6.
[36] Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 78, note.
[37] Eph. 3:1-3.
[38] *The Meaning of Paul for Today*, p. 45.

itself aloof as a privileged class. This narrow Jewish exclusiveness died hard. Paul came to the place where he was forced to acknowledge that it must die before he could enter into the full meaning of the gospel of Christ and be truly missionary. He must be more than the bearer of a message. He must be an embodiment of the message, having the outlook on life and people which the gospel involves. The clannishness of the Jew must perish and its place be taken by an attitude of the wholehearted brotherhood which would shine out and attract men by its inclusiveness and humility.

This new conception of utter equality before God must have remained a mystery, according to Paul, until through Jesus Christ God was able to make known that he is equally the Father of all. Paul saw, though he did not put it in our phraseology, that at best prophetic universalism was a form of ecclesiastical imperialism, in which the proselyte was denationalized and compelled to become to all intents and purposes a Jew. This promoted national pride and national aggrandizement. This is what is objectionable in proselytism. Paul saw that, in the light of the revelation in Christ, this attitude was a positive misrepresentation of God and his purpose and so arrived at a position where he could tolerate it no longer. A condescending attitude is unchristian even when the gospel of Christ is being preached. To feel that one is a member of a superior race is to deny the fundamental assumption of the gospel that before God we are all equally in need of his mercy and his grace. This is not to deny that men and nations and races are different one from another, and that some are more backward than others; it is rather to assert that these differences are not significant when we stand before God and when we deal with each other as his children. We run the grave danger today of bigoted and narrow denominationalism, of proud, exclusive racialism, and of self-sufficient nationalism. They have been known to insinuate themselves into the missionary enterprise and distort the motives which should prevail in our dealings with men of different races and nations. This is precisely the attitude which Paul found in himself as a member of a self-satisfied race, and he triumphed over it in the strength which came from Christ, "which," he said, "worketh in me

mightily."[39] He had learned the meaning of Jesus' words, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."[40]

In the light of what Paul had been trying to make clear, we can better appreciate the significance of his final rapturous paean of praise, which begins:

> For this cause [that is, because of God's marvelous love, poured out equally on Jew and Gentile] I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named . . . . to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.[41]

[39] Col. 1:29.
[40] John 12:24.
[41] Eph. 3:14-19.

Chapter VI

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF HISTORY? HAS IT ANY MEANING? THERE is no doubt or ambiguity in the answer which is given either in the Old Testament or the New. God has a purpose which he is working out steadily and consistently from the beginning to the end of time. He is the God who is using the historical process to arrive at a definite goal, one which only becomes apparent long after the action has begun and then only to a chosen few. These Old Testament seers brooded over the strange and tragic history of their people, and with marvelous insight, born, so they confidently believed, of divine inspiration, penetrated far under the surface of the facts and came to see their inner meaning. They saw God moving without deviation through all the varied and often disconcerting events to carry out a purpose which ultimately included all nations in its world-wide sweep. It is that which gives lasting significance to the story of this remarkable people, the children of Israel. They have come out of the hoary past, and they are with us still—different, to be sure, and yet ever the same, the most remarkably tenacious race the world has ever known.

That they believed God had a purpose in their history is very apparent. It comes out early in the narrative. The record has it that

> Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.[1]

This is from the "J" source of the Pentateuch, named from the word for God, "Jahweh," which appears so frequently in it. It is a prophetic narrative, giving expression to "the ideas and points of view which are so conspicuous afterwards in a more developed form in the writings

[1] Gen. 12:1-3.

of the great prophets."[2] This great declaration in Genesis dates back as far as the eighth or ninth century, so it gives us one of the earliest interpretations of the history of Israel. God is seen by the writer guiding the Father of the Faithful and informing him of the meaning of what God has for him to do, but, as John Skinner says, "The blessings here promised express the aspirations of the age in which the narrative originated and reveal the people's consciousness of its exceptional destiny among the nations of the world."[3]

It would be very much more satisfactory to us if the exact meaning of the words in the Hebrew were beyond doubt. The crucial part of the passage, for our purpose, is the last statement. In the American Standard Version and the New Translation of the Jewish Publication Society of America, the rendering is the same: "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." But it is different in several of the modern translations. In *The Bible: An American Translation,* the translator of Genesis being T. J. Meek, we find: "Through you shall all the families of the earth invoke blessing on one another." And Moffatt's translation has it thus: "Till all nations of the world seek bliss such as yours." It would not be profitable here to enter into a discussion of the Hebrew verb forms and attempt to decide whether it should be "bless themselves" or "be blessed." "In either case, ..." says Driver, "the thought remains, in the wider sense of the term, a Messianic one."[4] The discussion may fittingly be summarized in the words of James Strahan: "In either case, the Hebrew sphere of influence, like the divine purpose of grace, is regarded as co-terminous with the human race."[5]

It is evident that the people of Israel were a chosen people and that from an early day they were conscious of their call. In no other way is it possible to account for their tenacity of purpose or their conduct in relation to other nations. God had chosen them to be a peculiar people as he had no other. The relation between God and Israel was based on a covenant, a compact definitely entered into by both parties

[2] S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis,* p. xvii.
[3] *Genesis,* p. liv.
[4] *Op. cit.* p. 145.
[5] *Hebrew Ideals,* I, 29.

to the agreement. At Sinai God and Israel entered into such a relation, each assuming certain obligations. God would be their protector and guide on condition that Israel would be his obedient children. One or two very significant things are to be noted about this covenant. It was based on a deliberate choice, freely entered into by both sides. That is, it was not founded on blood relationship. Jehovah was to be their God, not because he was their progenitor or ancestor and so related to them as members of the same family or clan, but because he had so chosen and they had so decided. And coming directly out of this was the further feature that it was a covenant morally conditioned. Jehovah would stand by and cherish Israel so long as they were true to him and obeyed his laws. This made the relation between God and Israel unique among the nations; it laid the foundation of the final development into complete ethical monotheism. It is also the first of the connecting links which bind the Old and New Testament together, the old covenant and the new.

Were we to go no further than this, we with our present-day ideas of fair play would be somewhat at a loss to discover sufficient justification for God's action. Might it not be very much like favoritism on a grand scale? And, very unfortunately, that is what it meant to Israel and what it means today to a very large extent among the Jewish people. They firmly believe that they are a peculiar people and that this position is theirs by divine choice. They have a privileged standing in God's sight which no other people can hope to occupy or share with them. It was for them and for them alone. It can be understood how this narrow outlook might prevail during the days of their schooling, but there is nothing more tragic in religious history than the inability of this people to recognize the day of their visitation when under the leadership of their Messiah Jesus they might have fulfilled their foreordained function and become the great missionaries of salvation to the ends of the earth.

But to go back into Hebrew history, it is not our task here to trace in detail the work of the divine hand. The canvas is large and is crowded with figures, and sometimes it is hard to keep the perspective; but there is a central motif, and at times the strokes of the

brush are clear-cut and sure. We must ever bear in mind that the Jew was never a philosophic thinker like the Greek. He did not look out on life and ask questions about final reality or metaphysical being. The Jews never questioned the existence of God, but they were alive to, and terribly interested in, what he did. It was God in history, God in life, God in the ongoing story of their nation and its relation with others that kept them alive to his reality. He was to them always a God of moral earnestness, who cared deeply about right and wrong, and who demanded of his people Israel that they live up to a standard of righteousness unknown among any other people of antiquity. Here we lay our hand on the clew which will direct us as we attempt to trace the working of the divine purpose in the training of this race—a race which, however, was so often stubbornly unresponsive and so often wilfully disobedient to the command of God.

The first task was to make them into a people with unity and stamina, located in a land they could call their own. To make God responsible for all that took place in this painful process or for all that he is reported to have been and done would be to repudiate our intelligence and our moral sanity, but that is not to say that we cannot see the hand of God—yes, our God—in the welding of that nation into a self-conscious community which learned to stand for a few unique principles. The chief one of these was the belief that, whatever gods other people might have, their God was Jehovah. This came to them from Moses: this is the significance of Sinai, with its lightning and thunder. However often these people, not only in the wilderness but in the land they took possession of, fell from their high estate and went "whoring after other gods," they always knew they were going astray and could be called back to their allegiance by good king or worthy prophet in the name of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had worshiped the same God in the distant past. This is the wonder of Moses. He succeeded in so impressing his own conviction upon these nomads that they were permanently changed and never could get entirely away from the conviction that there was but one God for them and that he was the Jehovah who had established covenant with them at Sinai. God had chosen this people; he was engaged in the task of educating and disciplining them into a holy

community which ultimately might be used by him in a task of gigantic proportions.

From being nomads of the desert they became a unified people under a king, with Jerusalem as their capital city. The story is a long and complicated one. We have the fascinating histories of David and Solomon, when the kingdom was one and reached the zenith of its prosperity. Then follows the fatal disunity which permanently separated the people into two nations. While this is taking place locally in Palestine there looms up the shadow of great empires, Assyria and Babylon and also Egypt, which have their part to play. The small kingdoms like Syria and Moab and Phoenicia were little better than pawns with which the big powers played, and among them were Samaria and Judaea. There was no hope for them so far as their independence was concerned, and they went down one after another before the advance of the mighty empires of the East. The story is pathetic in the extreme but as illuminating and significant as any history ever written. This is not true of the story of the other lesser nations, but it is of Israel. What is the reason for this? The answer is at once forthcoming when one is able to discover the hand of God in the working out of the destiny of this nation. Their history has meaning because through them was being worked out as in a mighty drama the purpose of God. They are small and insignificant when compared with their conquerors, but they are highly important and their story is full of permanent meaning when their place in the full setting of the drama is appreciated and their influence on all subsequent history is known.

Other peoples have had their prophets, but no people have been so highly favored as Israel. Ancient Iran had its Zoroaster, but he had no successor. Israel is rich in its seers. The names of Moses and Samuel back in the beginnings, Nathan and other godly attendants at the court rebuking kings and warning them of dangers without and within, the mighty Elijah and the milder Elisha—all these before the day of the writing prophets form a noble succession of protagonists of the one true God. Without them the frequent apostasies of the people might easily have become permanent, and Israel might have sunk back into obscurity, as did Moab and Edom and the others. These stalwarts were succeeded by the uncouth Amos, the tender

Hosea, the countryman Micah, and the courtier Isaiah, the son of Amoz; and these in turn by the suffering Jeremiah, the priestly Ezekiel, the unknown evangelist of the Exile, whose work is found in the second part of the Book of Isaiah, and then by Ezra, the lover of the Law. This does not by any means exhaust the list, but it may serve to remind us that Israel was fortunate as no other nation in history in having a long line of prophetic souls whose voices were raised in the name of Jehovah and whose words are a part of the priceless legacy of Israel to the entire human race.

What did they do? In the years of the independence of their people they kept fresh the obligation of Israel to Jehovah. Their God was a righteous God, unlike the gods of the peoples about them. They insisted that Israel must be loyal to his high requirements. Despite all they could do, the final calamity befell both Samaria and Jerusalem. The little kingdoms were crushed, and the people carried off into captivity. This was surely sufficient to discourage the stoutest heart and to baffle the hopes of the most confident. God had chosen this people to be his own, but now he had deserted them. Such might easily have been the verdict, but not so with these indomitable prophets. They felt that they were in contact with sources of insight denied to the professional priest and conventional soothsayer. They had heard the word of Jehovah, "Thus saith the Lord," unpalatable and remorselessly frank, and had caught the overtones of the harmony of a richer and more far-reaching purpose than had even yet been disclosed. They heralded a Messiah, they caught the vision of a suffering Servant, they saw a great future for the faithful Remnant, and all this in spite of the ruin which lay around them. God had a deeper purpose than any earthly kingdom could fulfill. The very suffering and ignominy of the Captivity were being used, if Israel could only see it, for an end which was the real purpose of their choice by God.

As we enter into the meaning of the greatest of the prophets, those who saw most clearly the leading of the hand of God, we are amazed at their insight. What they heard God say and what they proclaimed as his word provide a rationale of the dealings of God with his people which comes to a climax in the love of God for all peoples. He had chosen one people to carry out his predetermined end. Then his

choice is seen in its true light; it is not favoritism but the welding of an instrument for a far-reaching purpose. Not only can it be justified; it must be seen as wisdom which is more than human. All that this suffering people had passed through was with this magnificent end in view. One at least of these seers into the mind of God saw the full meaning of all that Israel had endured when he said: "It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." [6]

In one sense God failed. The people he had chosen did not accept the call which was the ultimate reason for their existence. The Jews have continued through all the ages a compact, unified community, calling no land their own and yet attempting to make every country where they have gone a homeland. The synagogue has followed them in their journeyings and is the center around which their religious life has gathered. A large majority of the faithful are in the ranks of the orthodox and still look for the day when they will be restored to Jerusalem, when the promised Messiah will come, and when around them the nations will gather and acknowledge their allegiance to the one God Jehovah. There is a reform group consisting mostly of the intelligentsia in the larger centers of population who have given up the messianic expectation, eliminated all usages which do not prove their present worth, and settled down as members of the communities where they reside with as little difference from their neighbors as possible. And yet all, from the most orthodox to the most advanced liberals, cling to their ancestral faith and to the purity of their Jewish blood with the utmost tenacity. There is still the agelong racial exclusiveness. And closely related to this is the conviction that they are the Chosen People, especially beloved of God, and that as a race separate and distinct from others they are to function as priests of the Most High, a position of privilege which no others can occupy. They are where their forefathers were when Paul fought his battle and was

[6] Isa. 49:6.

forced to recognize that there was no distinction between Jew and Gentile before God.

The Christian Church, from the time when the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah and refused to accept God's mission for them, has looked upon itself as the true Israel. As Morrison puts it, "Over against Israel's rejection of Christianity, the Christian church has contended from the beginning that it is the true Israel, and that the Israel which rejected Christianity was untrue to itself and to the divine purpose which had called it out from the nations to be the revealer of God to all mankind." [7] We may add a statement from Canon B. H. Streeter to the effect "that the first Christians did not regard themselves as a new society, but as the ancient 'People of God,' that is, as that portion of the Church of the Patriarchs and Prophets which had not, by rejecting the Messiah, forfeited its birthright and cut itself off from the 'promises of Israel.'" [8] Paul went so far as to say, "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, ... but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter." [9]

The connection between the old and the new was made by Jesus Christ. To him it was a bitter disappointment to realize that his own people, to whom he had come and through whom he believed he was to fulfill the promise made to Israel by the prophets, had turned against him and his mission. At the end of his denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, who, as he declared, "shut the kingdom of heaven against men," Jesus cried out: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." [10]

What Jesus did was to rescue "Judaism from Jewry—this was his preeminent achievement in history." [11] To quote from Harnack, "Paul wrecked the religion of Israel on the cross of Christ; . . . . he tore the

[7] *What is Christianity?* p. 91.
[8] *The Primitive Church*, p. 47.
[9] Rom. 2:28-29.
[10] Matt. 23:13, 37-38.
[11] Morrison, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

gospel from its Jewish soil and rooted it in the soil of humanity."[12] The Jewish leaders realized this increasingly as the years passed and the Christian mission passed more and more to the Gentiles. It was the great rejection of the ages; it was the thwarting of a historical process, the refusal to enter into the stream of divine purpose which from the time they had been chosen had been in the mind of God and had gradually emerged in the consciousness of their inspired seers as "the glory of thy people Israel." Now their house was left to them desolate, and in bitterness they persecuted the new community and tried to destroy that Israel which had taken the torch from them and was carrying it wherever men were to be found. The purpose of God could not be nullified, even if the people who had been chosen to carry it out had failed him at the moment of opportunity. They had already performed a valuable service. They had been "intrusted with the oracles of God,"[13] they had produced the prophets, and it was as one of their race that Jesus Christ had come into the world. And while Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and gloried in his calling,[14] he did not forget that he was an Israelite and could not suppress the hope that even yet, in spite of the rejection of their Messiah, they might be saved. He uses the figure of grafting to convey his ardent longing. Speaking to the Gentiles, he says: "For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"[15] And when that occurs it will be "life from the dead."[16] This resurrection has not yet taken place.

So the history of Israel, so far as its significance in the Kingdom of God is concerned, merges in the history of the Christian Church. We have followed its early stages in the story of the expanding vision of the primitive church and in the missionary activity of Paul. Other

[12] *Op. cit.*, I, 568. See also Anderson Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul*, p. 166 f.

[13] Rom. 3:2.

[14] Rom. 11:13.

[15] Rom. 11:24.

[16] Rom. 11:15.

New Testament writings might have been made use of, but the significant turning points have been presented. It only remains to draw all the separate strands together in one unified and comprehensive declaration. Where can that be better expressed than in the words we have already considered, in the Great Commission as found at the end of Matthew's Gospel? It may be, it probably is, an interpretation made a generation after the time of Jesus, but it compresses into one vivid pronouncement what the world mission meant to those who started on its prosecution and who were convinced that this was what Jesus meant and what he had commanded them to do. The Commission does three things.

First, it defines the task. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." It is to make all peoples disciples or followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to do this by baptizing them in the triune name. By baptism converts among the nations were to be incorporated into the new fellowship. They were not to be individual believers independent of others but members of a unified community held together by their common loyalty to God, who was to them Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They were also to teach their converts "to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." The new loyalty, the new experience, was to be made permanently effective in a new life which would be after the Master's pattern.

Second, it authenticates the enterprise. "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." "Go ye therefore"—because the very universe itself in its spiritual meaning and moral power lies back of the mission and gives it authority. In the confidence that they may count on the presence of One who stands at the right hand of the Highest and who has at his disposal all the resources which heaven commands, the messengers of the Master through the centuries have quietly, calmly, and with perfect assurance gone to the ends of the earth and at the risk of losing all that was dear to them, even their lives, have proclaimed the gospel of the crucified and risen Lord. They have had in this assurance sufficient backing for anything which they might meet so long as it came to them in the line of duty. These words have a cosmic sweep, "all authority," "in heaven" as well as "on earth." They raise the world mission of Christianity to a place

of commanding importance, for its significance is not ended with earthly time but enters into the inner counsels of the Almighty and has a vital relation to the ultimate meaning of the universe and all that is in it.

Third, it gives the assurance of the continuing presence of Jesus Christ. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." To this may be added those other words that spring from the same background and carry an added assurance, "But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." [17] There are mysteries which we can never hope to resolve; but when all lesser things are set aside, the great final truths and assurances rise up before us like a massive mountain which cannot be moved. In a world like the one in which we live and in a troubled time like today we stand in need of just such a promise. And, thank God, it is ours. We are carried by Paul into the depths of the divine purpose when he says:

> Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. . . . . Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord.[18]

The other writings of the New Testament are in harmony with Paul's teaching as they deal with the relation of Christ to the world mission. At the very end the visions of the Seer of Patmos have a spacious range as he pictures the scene at the final consummation. For him the leaves of the tree of life are "for the healing of the nations." [19] He assembles the nations on the stage in the great drama of the end:

> After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and

[17] John 16:33.
[18] I Cor. 15:24-25, 58.
[19] Rev. 22:2.

tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . . . Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.[20]

[20] Rev. 7:9-10, 12.

Part Two

THE WORLD MISSION IN HISTORY

Chapter VII

THE COURSE OF EVENTS

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD MISSION HAS A BIBLICAL BACKGROUND, OF WHICH we have just made a survey. It has also had a history, which has much to teach about the nature of the enterprise and the principles on which it is based. It is not necessary here to tell the story in detail. That is provided in other works, notably those by Professor Kenneth Scott Latourette.[1] This volume is intended to be an introduction to the underlying significance of the world mission. Our purpose, then, must be to ascertain what contribution has been made by events which have occurred, tendencies which have developed, and theories which have prevailed during the long history of the expansive movement. Lessons have been learned or may be learned from the history itself which could not be learned in any other way. In order to profit by such a study we first present a brief outline of the history of missions, on the basis of which, without confusion, we may discover what the expanding process signifies.

1. *The Christian conquest of the Roman Empire* began with the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost[2] and ended about the year 500. Some would attempt to be more exact and make the year 476 the time of the close of the first era of Christian expansion; but not much, if anything, is to be gained. The date 476 is frequently given as that of the "fall of Rome." What happened was that Romulus Augustulus was deposed as emperor in Italy, and soon after that there was no Western Roman emperor. The center of the empire was shifted to the East in Constantinople. This change, was, of course, higly significant, but the date 476 is of minor importance in a process which extended over a long period. At any rate, in less than five hundred years Christianity had become the religion of the Roman

[1] See Bibliography.

[2] Acts, chap. 2.

Empire both East and West, the first achievement of the new religion as it went out to carry its gospel to the entire world.

The full import of the meaning of this mighty conquest can be seen only on closer examination. The period closing with the year 500 must be separated into two parts, the dividing line being the year 325, when the Council of Nicaea was held. This council marks the culmination of the process by which the Emperor Constantine became the sponsor of Christianity and placed it in a position of privilege among the religions of the empire. In 312 Constantine fought the battle of Saxa Rubra at the Milvian Bridge near Rome. There is a tradition that just before this battle he saw in the sky a cross with the words, *"In hoc signo vinces."* Soon after he affiliated himself with the Christian Church and espoused its cause. Much has been written about Constantine and his motives in this drastic and dramatic action. What we may be sure of is that with rare sagacity he became aware that the church had become the strongest factor in the empire that he had made his own. He wanted a united empire, and he sensed the fact that he could have such an empire only if he had a united church at its center. Hence he called a council of the whole church to compose its doctrinal differences, and this council met in 325. These statements may be made without entering the thorny controversy concerning the sincerity of Constantine and the genuineness of his Christian profession. The one fact that emerges above all others is that by the beginning of the fourth Christian century Christianity had made itself the leading religion of the empire, and the decision of Constantine was the recognition of that fact.

Before Constantine's change of front the church had been despised, scorned, proscribed, and persecuted; now it was in the royal favor, and increasingly, as one edict followed another, exchanged places with the other faiths and cults which had heretofore had full freedom in the life of the people. The temporary reaction under Julian, called "the Apostate" because of his attempt to take the empire back to its old pagan foundation, was ineffective and lost all its force with his death in 363. The traditional saying with which he is credited as he lay dying in the eastern desert, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered," is

undoubtedly spurious, but it enshrines a fact; the Galilean had conquered, and never again did organized opposition raise its head in the empire.

Very much remained to be done to carry the gospel into every section of the empire, especially into the country districts and mountain valleys where paganism remained entrenched in the lives of the simple peasants for many decades. It was only a question of time, however, before a nominal acceptance of the new faith was everywhere the rule.

When Christianity became the recognized religion there was a radical change in its relations, its outlook, and its methods. That the church suffered as well as prospered is an established fact. How it could have been otherwise is difficult to imagine. Christianity had come out into the full current of imperial affairs and from that time on was to be an integral part of the developing life of the Western world. It was to play a more important part in the making of medieval and modern Europe; but it had already, following upon the new attitude of the emperors, been wedded to the political, economic, and social life of the age and could not extricate itself from it even if it had so desired.

The dates in this outline overlap. The Roman Empire included in its wide sweep many of the peoples of northern Europe whose conversion to Christianity becomes our task to consider in the next period. But even before the year 500 some of them had been evangelized, and they considered themselves as much a part of the church as those who lived in the south in the more settled parts of the empire. That is true of parts of Gaul, or France, and of sections of the Balkans where the Goths were encroaching on the boundaries of the empire. And, strangely enough, it is true of the British Isles, where the Britons had received the new faith during the Roman occupation, and of Ireland, where the gospel had been carried by Patrick. But these were only the beginnings; the real task of making northern Europe Christian was seriously undertaken under very different auspices from those which obtained when the old empire was being evangelized.

2. *The winning of northern Europe* covers a period extending roughly from the year 500 to the year 1500. The new era may almost

be said to begin with the baptism of Clovis, King of the Franks, in 496. But the sending of Augustine of Canterbury to England in 596 was the inauguration of the formal mission on the part of the church. This was the act of one of the most important of the popes, Gregory the Great. The period ends in the age of the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, and just before the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth. It extends over a full thousand years, the Middle Ages, which Latourette calls "The Thousand Years of Uncertainty," centuries during which Chritsianity was out on a new and uncertain adventure and was being tested by its own inner problems and by its relations with the state and with new peoples. It was also subjected to attack from without, principally from Islam, which took from it some of its fairest provinces.

But while the period must be said to extend to the sixteenth century, when the last of the peoples of northern and eastern Europe were being brought into the church, the main activity fell during the first five centuries—that is, from the time of Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) to that of Gregory VII, Hildebrand (1073-85). This is the part of the Middle Ages known as the Dark Ages, the chaotic time when the barbarians broke through the boundaries of the empire and set the clock of civilization and enlightenment back for at least half a millenium. Europe emerged out of the chaos only as her people became Christian and learned the arts of civilization from the Church, which brought a new and vigorous religion and also much of the culture of the old Empire. Thus again do we see how Christian missions are inextricably enmeshed in the story of Western Culture and progress, a relation in which the expansive forces of Christianity often played a leading part. The flowering of the Middle Ages in the latter half of the millenium, particularly in the glorious thirteenth century, could never have occurred had it not been for the devoted labors of hundreds of monks who spread out over northern Europe and changed the course of its entire life. Then it was that the Anglo-Saxons in Britain received the faith, Germany was converted, Scandinavia was brought into the Christian way, and the Slavs in Russia and farther to the west were slowly Christianized. Their conversion may have been very superficial, but it changed the entire current of their life and made

the people at least nominally Christian. New nations were coming into existence, and "Christendom" was born, the family of nations and peoples who called themselves Christian. It was a kind of unity which was recognized as more or less binding until our own time, when, by the official defection of Russia and the adoption of an anti-Christian attitude by the German and Italian leaders, the designation can no longer justifiably be applied to Europe as a whole.

During this period there was not only expansion but loss. It came largely through the militant advance of Islam. Mohammed died A.D. 632 in an obscure town in Arabia; but in just one hundred years the Moslem armies had swept across North Africa, penetrated through Spain into France, and were stopped only in 732 by Charles Martel of France. He was given the name Martel, or "the Hammer," because of the blows he delivered on that memorable day when he stemmed the tide of Islamic advance at the battle of Tours in central France. But while Charles turned these warriors back, they had already inflicted losses from which Christianity has never recovered. This was not so true of Spain, where after several hundred years of occupation the Moslems were finally driven out, in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella in the fifteenth century. But it was true in North Africa, which was made Islamic then and remains loyal to the Prophet to the present time. When we think of Augustine and Tertullian and Cyprian—the great church fathers in North Africa—and realize that there are no Christians there now, we may appreciate how the church at that time staggered under the blow. Almost the same reaction is ours when we think of the Egypt of Athanasius and Clement and Origen, an Egypt which is now overwhelmingly Islamic and in which there is only a minority of Christian Copts with impaired vitality and no missionary purpose. Add to these Palestine and Syria, where only a few remnants of Christian churches remain; Turkey both in Europe and in Asia Minor, which at the time of the Council of Nicaea was the most Christian land in the entire empire; and other outlying sections like Mesopotamia and Persia, which had a sizeable Christian population but which are now in the Islamic column. When we think of all these, we can realize some of the reasons why these centuries

may be spoken of from the Christian viewpoint as precarious and uncertain.

But we must remember also that during this period there occurred a Christian advance toward the east which reached as far as China. The Syrian or Nestorian Church, with headquarters in the Mesopotamian valley, was alive to its opportunity. Islam eventually destroyed so much of this work in its eastern conquests that we can recover with difficulty the full story of this remarkable movement, but we have sufficient information to justify the conclusion that this was a major missionary advance and might have been the beginning of a steady growth in lands which the church is now at a loss to know how to reach. There was also an effort on the part of the Western church to carry the gospel to the lands of the East, but it amounted to little. So far as permanent results are concerned, the period of the Middle Ages was pre-eminently the period of the winning of northern Europe to the Christian Church.

3. *The modern occupation of the world* lies in a period beginning with the era of the Protestant Reformation and the Counter Reformation in the Roman Catholic Church and extending to the present day, or—to put it definitely and conveniently—to the meeting of the International Missionary Council which was held in India at Madras over the year end of 1938-39.

This period was opened by an almost immediate advance movement on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. Stimulated by the Counter Reformation and by the organization of the Society of Jesus under Ignatius Loyola in 1540, missionaries went out into the lands being occupied by Portugal and Spain in the Americas and in Asia and Africa, and also to other countries like China and Japan. The greatest of all these missionaries was Frances Xavier, who was one of the group with Loyola in the founding of the Jesuit order, and who himself went out and carried the gospel to India and Japan. He died on an island off the coast of China, praying for the day when the brazen gates of that closed country would open to the gospel messengers.

The surprising thing is that there was no corresponding Protestant advance. The reasons for this we shall consider later, but the fact was that until about the end of the eighteenth century Protestantism was finding herself and was only slowly becoming missionary. An ex-

ception to this was the missionary movement in the little group of Moravians who, living on the estates of the devout Count Zinzendorf in Saxony, were led by him and their own religious zeal to undertake missions to the West Indies, South Africa, and elsewhere, especially among the backward and neglected peoples of the world. This mission work began in 1732. There were several other efforts to carry the gospel to non-Christian peoples, which will be noted later. The wider Protestant movement began in England under William Carey, the gifted Baptist cobbler-preacher, who in 1792 was instrumental in effecting an organization and who went out to India to make a remarkable contribution to the Christian cause and to the entire life of the country. Then began the formation of missionary societies in Britain, Germany, and in the United Sates, and the undertaking of a world-wide movement which continued to expand and develop in an amazing manner until our own time. The entire world was occupied, save a few countries like Afghanistan and Tibet, which until today continue to bar the entrance of the Christian missionary.

It should be added that after the enthusiastic beginnings in the sixteenth century the missionary movement in the Roman Catholic Church suffered a serious decline in the eighteenth. A new era of missionary expansion opened for this church at about the same time the vigorous Protestant movement began, and it has continued unabated to the present day.

Such in briefest outline is the story of the missionary enterprise. We are faced today with difficult and most serious problems, as difficult as at any other time in the whole story. What, then, are the lessons to be learned from the progress of the mission and the procedures which have from time to time been adopted? What is the meaning of the history of a movement which has circled the globe, which has penetrated almost every land, which has found itself at home among peoples of the most diverse cultures, and which today, when the world is being torn by war and misunderstanding, suspicion and hate, seems to be the only bond which holds people together in mutual confidence and self-denying love? We may not be able to answer these questions fully or to our entire satisfaction, but we should attempt to extract all the meaning possible from the data at our disposal, and to this task we now turn.

Chapter VIII

THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN A DEVELOPED CULTURE

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE REMARKABLE FACT THAT THE EMPIRE which had done everything in its power to destroy Christianity embraced it and made it the established religion of the state? Can we question the declaration that

> There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune? [1]

Is it not another way of saying, "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son"?[2] We cannot but recognize that there are crucial times in the lives of nations which offer the opportunity for the incoming of a new religion which may be entirely wanting in other periods. The history of the Christian mission provides many illustrations of this fact, but none more striking than that during the early days of the Roman Empire.

At that time the life of Rome and of the outlying provinces had reached a point of religious decay which was alarming. This was recognized by Augustus Caesar who determined that something must be done. He was not a truly religious man himself, but he sensed the need of a religious foundation for the new empire he was trying to build. So he gave himself, not very successfully, to the resuscitation of the old Roman religion. It was at just this time that Jesus Christ was born, and in a few years his followers were making their way into every part of the empire. They had a gospel which could meet the need of the people as the old religion could not. In this early day there were a number of important competitors. The old Roman religion offered very little, but the mystery religions were everywhere

[1] Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar,* Act IV, scene 3.
[2] Gal. 4:4.

and were making a real contribution to the religion of the people. They offered salvation, a convincing emotional experience, and the promise of immortality. They had a story to tell, and without a story a religion is helpless. But again, Christianity had a more wonderful story, and the unique thing about it was that it was true. In addition, its salvation was more real, its experience deeper and more impregnated with high moral earnestness, and its promises of salvation more sure and satisfying.

The results of the mission were not achieved without the most vigorous opposition, which took various forms. There were brilliant literary attacks, such as those by Celsus and Porphyry; there were social ostracism, economic hindrances, and above all open persecution, even to the point of death. Not all the Christians were able to stand the test, and many recanted; but there were always those who could be counted on to endure to the uttermost, and they are the heroes of our faith. Nor was the church united. Schism and heresy showed their heads at an early day, and have always been near at hand in the history of the Christian Church. But with all this the new religion succeeded; that is, it met a need as no other religion did. That it was able to do this gradually permeated the minds and hearts of men and women, and despite all that could be done to prevent it, the once despised faith became the religion of the empire. The other religions were discarded and died, never to appear again. There was much good in these cults, especially in one of them, Mithraism. It was said of it that "It fell at the last, not because it was entirely bad, but *because it was so nearly good*." [3] That Christianity was influenced by these cults is to be recognized. To give only one illustration, December 25th was the birthday of Mithras long before it became the day on which the birth of Jesus was celebrated. While at this point—and others—borrowing on the part of Christianity can be shown, the more significant fact is that Christianity remained true to itself at its core. Its story of Jesus Christ was original and not borrowed; its experience of the Holy Spirit was unique and not a contribution of the mystery cults. Points of contact there were, and likenesses did exist; but there was

[3] W. J. Phythian-Adams, *Mithraism*, p. 94.

no suggestion that Christianity and even the best of the other religions might get together, discover that they were not very different, and decide to co-operate. On the contrary, there was an essential difference at the heart of the new faith which made such assimilation an impossibility if Christianity was to continue to exist. To its followers God had revealed himself uniquely in Jesus Christ; he was a living factor in their lives, one with whom they had communion, and allegiance to whom was an all-absorbing experience which left no place for any other loyalty. They veritably believed that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." [4] To them Christianity was an exclusive religion, and it is difficult to conceive how it could have succeeded in the face of the forces arrayed against it had it been anything else.

But this is not all that must be said. Not only did Christianity display rigidity at the point of its central allegiance, but it showed remarkable flexibility and adaptability in its contact with the life of the empire. It had no more than begun its task when it came into contact with one of the mightiest weapons ever forged by the human mind, Greek thought. Behind Greek thought was a great tradition. We can only allude to the tragedians with their dramatic presentation of man as a being who has real power of choice but who is also in the hands of an inexorable fate once that choice is made. We can only mention the great philosophers—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and their successors. These mighty giants forever determined the forms of thought in the Western world, and Christianity shared in the heritage. It was inevitable, and it is highly significant. What happened? Christianity furnished the Greek with a satisfying religion, and the Greek furnished Christianity with a theology according to his own genius. Our religion is Hebrew; its theology, for the most part, Greek. The doctrine of the triune God and the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ occupied the minds of the thinkers of the church for hundreds of years, and the creeds which are widely accepted today as the official formularies of the Christian faith are in terms of Greek philosophy. Our function here is to call attention to the fact that in the prosecu-

[4] Acts 4:12 (A.V.).

tion of the world mission Christianity was brought into contact with thought forms which were strange and in some respect alien to its nature and that it allied itself with them and made them the vehicle of its doctrines. It found that its religious teaching had to be interpreted in the terms of the thinking of the people to whom it was brought. The gospel was not altered at its center; but its expression, its defense, its interpretation were changed very deeply and have remained so during its entire history. Metaphysics, which is not natural to the Semitic mind, had entered the Christian sphere, and the formulated doctrines of the ongoing Christian community were conceived in language which was in striking contrast with that of the Old Testament and even of the New.

Let us make the same supposition which was suggested in an earlier chapter: suppose Christianity had gone east instead of west, what kind of theology would have developed? This is not a foolish question. It brings to a head the point that Christian theology—theology as contrasted with experience—was developed not out of the original religious germ but from without, by contact with the thought life of the people to whom the religion was carried. Had it gone in another direction, the outcome theologically certainly would have been very different. As it was, it became a European religion with a European theology and has remained such ever since. No doubt it received such a bent that it can never be completely changed. We may well believe that this was according to God's will and guidance. It is fitting that the Greek, the mightiest thinker in the Western world, should have made a permanent, indelible impress on Christian thinking; but let us remember that such thinking is not distinctively Christian and that the need for theological restatement which so many feel today may be the moving of a truly Christian conviction.

The missionary enterprise faces a critical situation today. Christianity is being brought into close contact with other modes of thought, notably in India and China and Japan. These people already have a culture older than that of the Western world. They have a literary and religious tradition which is not at all like that of Europe and America. Will the history of the assimilation of Greek thought be re-

peated in the world of the East? This is a living question which is becoming ever more insistent as educated men and women are led to acknowledge the claims of Christ on their lives and their thinking. These people must see Christianity through their own eyes and interpret it in their own thought forms if it is to have convincing meaning for them. Undoubtedly they will be greatly influenced by the formulations which come to them out of the West along with the gospel which is transforming their lives, but that is not the last word. They are of the East, not the West, and that means that they have their own ways of thinking which are as different from ours as their dress. All this undoubtedly will be accentuated at the close of the present world conflict. It is inevitable. It will seem increasingly incongruous for outsiders to think of attempting to mold the mind of the East in the thought forms of the West. As human beings we all have fundamentally the same needs which can be met only by a common gospel. This we believe we have in Jesus Christ. But just as the Greek accepted the same Christ with the Jew and had the same experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit and yet worked it out in his own way in doctrinal statement, so it may be with the Oriental. It is well that we have this history back of us as we face situations as difficult as any which confronted the church in the Roman Empire. It gives us confidence when we realize that even though we are only in the beginnings of the Christianization of the peoples of Asia and Africa, the leading minds of the newly formed Christian communities are already reaching out after statements that will adequately interpret this new religious experience in their own familiar modes of thought and ways of life.

Christianity also came into contact with the might and authority of Rome, and again the new missionary religion was changed. It was in a different manner, but the result was just as significant. The Roman was different from the Greek; he was not a philosopher but a practical man of affairs. Romans conquered the world by arms and built an empire. Their whole outlook on life was different. It is to be seen today in the difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern (or Greek) Orthodox Church. The one is a unified organization with a dominant controlling center in Rome; the other

is a loose federation of a dozen or more independent bodies held together by adhesion to a common creed but beyond that unable to act together as a unit. Nothing could be more characteristically Roman and Greek. Out of the pragmatic West two doctrines demanded by the practical needs of the mission received their most characteristic forms. One was in answer to the question of the Philippian jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" [5] It was asked in the East, in Greece, but it was asked by a Roman! It was the kind of question a Roman might be expected to ask. Paul's answer was the one which has come down through the ages as the classic response to such a request, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." [6] But it was centuries before the doctrine of salvation received the form which has come down to us today. It was Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, the greatest theologian of the Western church, who wrought out the doctrine of grace and salvation which was taken up and developed by John Calvin and conveyed by him to the Protestant world.

The other doctrine was that of the church. It had to do with authority and organization, on which the Roman was strong. Earnest Renan, the French critic, suggested and worked out in considerable detail the thought that we have the Roman Empire in the world today in the organization of the Roman Catholic Church. Much of what the old empire stood for the Roman Church stands for now. The agelong emphasis on close, unified organization under a single, absolute authority in Rome, with its watchwords of law and order, obedience and submission, is the same now as it was in the ancient day when the power was wielded, not by a pope, but by an Augustus or a Diocletian. And now we hear the Indian Christian leaders chafing in the harness of Western organization, saying that that is not the Indian way, that organization means little to them and that the Indian church of the future must present a very different aspect so far as its outer forms are concerned. The same gospel, yes—and none are more devoted to it than those who have been touched by Christ in India—but a gospel which must be fitted into the structure of Indian life and thought as it was in the early day into the life of Greece and Rome. We are only

[5] Acts 16:30.
[6] Acts 16:31 (A.V.).

now coming into the day when this process is beginning, but it is inevitable that it will grow in volume and strength until we shall have a Christianity expressing the Indian genius—and that of China and Japan —as it has that of the Western world.

One of the most interesting studies in connection with the Christian conquest of the Roman Empire concerns the manner in which the new religion was propagated. We know of almost no missionaries after the apostolic or New Testament period. We have the names and the works of many apologists, the church fathers, but not of those whose special task it was to carry the gospel to new regions. Out of the hazy traditions of the first three hundred years loom the names of two Gregorys. One was Gregory the Illuminator, who is honored by the Armenians as the founder of their national church—and be it known that the Armenians were the first people who as a people, led by their king, could be called a Christian people. The other Gregory is less distinct. He was called Gregory Thaumaturgus, or "Worker of Wonders," who in the third century was a traveling evangelist in eastern Asia Minor not far to the west of Armenia. The epithet by which he was known would indicate that he must have made use of spectacular methods to attract the people. We today would undoubtedly call him a sensational preacher, or a "high-pressure" evangelist. He is referred to here only because he and the Apostle of Armenia are the only missionaries as such whose names are known between the first and the fourth centuries.

How, then, was the gospel carried? It is generally recognized that the work was done largely by the ordinary lay members of the church as they pursued their regular vocations. Among these were slaves, who were often prominent members of the church, and also Christian merchants, who carried their wares far and wide over the splendid roads and preached the gospel as they went. To these must be added soldiers, members of the legions which were stationed out on the frontiers and were frequently kept in one place for long periods. Wherever the legions were located the evidence of the presence of groups of Christians can be found. In the first half of the third century a rigorist group in the church, led by the fiery extremist Tertullian, protested against military service on the part of any fol-

lower of the Prince of Peace; but that protest was of short duration. In the third century and after the legions included many Christians, and they are responsible for the carrying of the gospel to many places where no others could well have gone. No other evidence of the vitality of the religion which they professed is as weighty as this. With all that scholars and writers may contribute to the interpretation of the faith, Christianity must be stated in simple terms, clear and concise, which can be used by the lay worker and understood by the uncultured man whom he meets in the ordinary contacts of life.

This, however, is not all that can be said. Harnack calls attention to another explanation of the spread of Christianity which is highly significant. He makes much of the church as an organized body. To quote a sentence which Harnack puts in italics, *"Wherever Christian communities, episcopally governed, were scanty, Christians were also scanty upon the whole; while, if a town had no bishop at all, the number of Christians was insignificant."*[7] It was not an individual matter but a group responsibility, and not until the group functioned as a group under competent leadership and strict authority did the church make progress. The increasing emphasis on the church, which has been one of the significant notes sounded during the recent past, is an authentic note. In other words, the place of the church in missionary strategy has historical sanction.

The reciprocal influence between the new religion and the old culture which we have been exploring was inevitable. Was the new thing which emerged genuine Christianity? It must be acknowledged that much was picked up, and unfortunately retained, which has been a serious incumbrance. What we want to know is whether, in spite of marring accretions, the church was in the true line of an apostolic succession. Dr. C. C. Morrison's recently expressed thought that Christianity is that continuing community which we call the Christian Church and which has lasted through the centuries has much to contribute here. The church is a body which has always asserted its loyalty to the same Christ, which experiences the same salvation, which holds by the same sacred Book, and which is able to recognize the es-

[7] *Op. cit.*, I, 471 f.

sential brotherhood of all believers whenever and wherever they are to be found. It is also the community which through self-criticism and self-reformation shows its ability to remake itself. This is our hope for the future. But this does not mean that we can ever return to what is called "apostolic Christianity." The attempt to do so always misses the mark. What usually occurs is that one aspect or another of the life of the early church is singled out and great emphasis is laid on that feature, the thought being that by doing so apostolic Christianity has been restored.

We may profit by the experience of John Henry Newman, who, in the days of his mental and spiritual anguish, found himself dealing with the terms "apostolicity" and "catholicity." He discovered that he could not in his day find a church which could be called apostolic, in the sense of exhibiting the features of the inexperienced and emerging organization of the first century; so he gave up the word "apostolic" as being an essential description of the true church. The church he was looking for must be "catholic," one fitted to meet the needs of all men in every place and in every period. He ultimately came to the conclusion that he could find all that he was looking for in the Roman Church. We may differ from him—we do, as Protestants—but we must learn the same lesson: that for "the church to be the church," wideness of outlook, breadth of sympathy, and an understanding of the present situation are altogether necessary. The church must be truly ecumenical—and that not only in the sense that it is to be found everywhere but that in every age and in every land it enters into the life of the people as a vital force, relevant to their needs and developing along the lines of their national and racial genius. It must have apostolic features, to be sure, or forfeit the right to the Christian name; but it must embody other features which cannot be found in the church of the first century and which must differ from place to place and from century to century as Christianity continues to do its work in the world.

Chapter IX

THE CHRISTIAN MISSION AMONG BARBARIANS

CHRISTIANITY HAD BECOME THE DOMINANT RELIGION IN A CIVILIZED AND cultured society. Now it found itself confronted by a society of barbarians. The Greek word *barbaros* means "strange, foreign, slavish, rude." These barbarians were the ancestors of the people now occupying northern Europe, people who pride themselves on being the vanguard of civilization and progress. What we have in the story of the progress of missions in the Middle Ages is the story of the transition of people who were living in an unorganized, more or less wild state in the forests of northern Europe into the ordered life of modern times. To call the times in which we are living "ordered" must be done with apologies, but when the present with all its blemishes is compared with the condition of our forefathers in the early centuries of our era the term is not altogether unfitting.

The most significant fact in the history of the West in the fifth and sixth centuries is the irruption of the northern barbarians into the civilized lands of the south. Ancient history, so called, came to an end, and Europe was ushered into what is known as the Dark Ages—"dark" because the light of learning and culture was almost extinguished. These crude, illiterate men from the north cared little for the things of the mind and of the spirit, and all Europe was plunged into chaos. This condition lasted for several centuries; and when light began again to break through, it became evident that a fundamental change had taken place in the locus of civilization. The south had lost its pre-eminence, and the peoples of the north had taken the leadership into their hands. It was Paris and not Rome which held the promise of the future. New countries began to emerge, and within a few centuries they were vying with the old established centers in the south for supremacy. This they ultimately achieved and have retained until the present time. Christianity was again able to take ad-

vantage of the "tide in the affairs of men" to play a highly important part in the transition. The new faith brought with it not only the gospel of salvation but the gospel of a settled life, in which the arts of civilization were slowly exchanged for the unsettled ways of semi-nomads. This was done by the missionaries of the cross who taught the barbarians agriculture and craftsmanship, manners and humane living as well as the gospel and the churchmanship which went with it.

The story is very different from that of the preceding period when Christianity confronted the highest civilization in the world. Christianity did not bring civilization in that earlier period; it transformed it. Such is the condition today when the missionary goes to Japan, India, China, and parts of the Islamic world. It is not necessary for him to take a culture but to inject into it certain elements which will not destroy but recondition it. And just as there were many elements in the old Greco-Roman culture which had lasting value and are with us today, so it will be of Asiatic culture. The Asiatic may well be proud of his heritage and look upon it as a permanent contribution to his life and also the life of the world. It needs transformation, just as did that of the old Western classical world, but it must remain as the foundation on which the new will be built if Christianity is to be truly indigenous and become the expression of the deepest life of the people involved. However, this is not the full story of the work of missions, then or now. Just as the mission then was compelled to meet people more or less savage, so it is today. The peoples of Africa for the most part are in a backward condition, illiterate, undeveloped, and unable to confront the situation created by the modern world without the assistance of others who are interested in their welfare. They are to be found not only in Africa, but in North and South America, in the South Sea Islands, and in scattered groups in other parts of the world. They cannot remain as they are. Modern civilization will see to that no matter what the Christian missionary may do, so it is his task to carry the gospel which will save these unprotected peoples from losing their souls in the transformation of their lives which is now taking place.

The man in northern Europe had no deep hold on his religion. The

period has been called "the twilight of the Gods." Woden and Thor among the Germans and Perun among the Russians could be dislodged with one demonstration of their ineffective helplessness, nevermore to claim the allegiance of their votaries. This was demonstrated over and over again. The peoples of northern Europe were ready for another religion and other gods when Christianity came to them. Moreover, it is always true that the gods and spirits of animistic religions have no resisting power when they come into contact with the deities of a more advanced religion. We note, however, a curious thing which is taking place in the minds of many Germans today—how many it is impossible to say—in that they are turning back to their old tribal gods. A dictator state, totalitarian and intolerant, is always essentially national and even tribal in its outlook. A God of the whole world like the Christian God does not fit in well with their narrow view; so they revert to their distant tribal past and feel at home with the little gods of their primitive ancestry.

To meet the unprecedented situation which was thrust upon the church in the Middle Ages, a new agency came into being. The monk and the monastery were the evangelizing instruments during this period. The institution of monasticism was founded and began to attract pious souls in the Near East. There men who despaired of living the kind of life which they thought was truly Christian abandoned society and went off from the haunts of men to save their own souls. They would sometimes go off alone, hermits, but more frequently in a group, under a leader, which became the nucleus of a monastery with its abbot. It was Benedict of Nursia, a man of the West, who conceived a new thought, that these devoted men might be useful to others as well as to themselves. With this idea the institution was carried to the West. It spread rapidly and met a need; it seemed the providential instrument to perform a tremendous task. In the earlier period attention has been called to the absence of formal missionaries. In contrast, the period before us is alive with men and women bent on the conversion of the heathen barbarians. The forests of northern Europe might almost be said to have swarmed with missionaries. The list of names is most impressive—no wonder Montalembert could fill

his five large volumes with the fascinating story of *The Monks of the West.*

It is not only the monk but the monastery which must be emphasized. These institutions dotted over the landscape became the centers of a new life. Agriculture and the settled life which it makes necessary sprang up around these busy hives of industry and gradually extended out for long distances until the life of the people as a whole was completely altered. They were dispensers of charity and purveyors of good will and kindness in an age when these virtues were little known and slightly heeded. It was in the monasteries also that learning was kept alive. The culture of Rome and Greece was carried by these devoted men, who little realized what they were really doing. They looked upon themselves as emissaries of Christ and the church, which they were, but they were also heralds of a new day when civilized life and learning and the commerce of new cities just coming to birth would begin to make themselves felt in northern Europe. So Christian missions among backward peoples today are but repeating what was done on a large scale in northern Europe when they carry with them the amenities of life and the learning of the schools.

The people of northern Europe came over into the Christian Church *en masse* and usually quickly. This they nearly always did following their chieftains or kings. The conversion of the Irish and the Scots, the winning of the little kingdoms into which England was divided, the bringing of the peoples of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway into the Christian fold, and the gradual incoming of the various Slavic peoples who one after another through a long period were visited by missionaries and ultimately were to be counted as Christian—all this makes a fascinating story. In almost every case there appeared on the scene a great missionary. Patrick in Ireland; Columba in Scotland; Augustine in the little Kentish kingdom in England; Boniface, the Apostle of Germany; Ansgar, the Apostle of the North; Cyril and Methodius among the Slavs along the lower Danube —those are only a few of a great host. Sometimes heathenism toppled at one blow, as when Boniface boldly hewed down the sacred oak of Thor at Geismar in western Germany, or when the image of Perun

went floating down the Dnieper River in southwest Russia with no dire results as had been predicted. Not always as picturesquely as this but often quite as conclusively the people became convinced that their old gods were useless. And when they made the change it was as a group. Individual initiative was not developed and what was done was done as a body. It is so today, notably in the mass movement in India, where the lowly and backward outcastes are pressing into the Christian Church in large numbers. It is to be hoped that one lesson of great importance may have been learned—that it is dangerous to baptize and admit into full membership men and women who know little or nothing of the meaning of what they are doing. This was the great mistake of the medieval mission. Too much confidence was placed in the rite of baptism, in formal acquiesence in the doctrines of the faith, and in the efficacy of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It is easy to stand off at this distance and criticize, but we are surely justified in doing so when the results which we should expect were not forthcoming.

We are met by another fact which has just been mentioned—that these people were led into the church by their chieftains or kings. Sometimes the account is uncertain and does not provide the necessary information, but whenever the details are given the ruler is found leading the way. The Norwegian church does honor today to Saint Olaf, their king who had much to do with the coming of the new religion. The Saga of Olaf Trygvesson has entered into the national literature of the race. He was their king, brave and mighty, who accepted Christianity and then proceeded to compel his people to do the same. It is a fascinating yet terrible story, a story which was repeated under different conditions elsewhere. The great Frankish king, Charlemagne, waged bitter warfare for twenty years or more before he was able to force the reluctant and completely exhausted Saxons to bow before the cross of Christ. We have also the story of the Teutonic Knights and the Knights of the Cross, who in eastern Germany and in the sections along the Baltic Sea, where Lithuania and neighboring states now lie, built castles and settled down in the midst of a pagan people and were not satisfied until under their military power the poor peasants had submitted to the church. It is utterly incomprehensible

to us but not to these missioners. They took up the word of Jesus, "Compel them to come in,"[1] and acted on it with a vengeance. They were convinced that in the heaven which they believed they were opening up for men and women by the gateway of the sacraments, these same people would come and express gratitude that they had been saved from a dreadful hell—even though it had been by compulsion. Thank God, these accounts of the use of force do not occur everywhere; but they must be related to show how some, at least, of our forefathers were brought into the Christian Church which now we love with intense loyalty.

A sobering thought is suggested by what we have been considering. Mistakes were made at almost every step; inadequacies appear as soon as one takes a single view under the immediate surface; and one is almost dumbfounded by the superficiality of the whole evangelizing process. And yet with all this the conclusion is forced upon the student that there is no people which today is looked upon as Christian, whether it be Protestant or Orthodox or Roman Catholic, which did not become Christian during this period and in this way. Even the Roman Empire itself remained in the pagan ranks until its head, Constantine, made the cross his emblem. Are men and women fundamentally different today? Can we expect whole peoples to become Christian by being reached one by one? This kind of undermining is our only approach in the beginning, and the success of Christian missions in the modern period has been built on that foundation. But except in certain of the South Sea Islands, where the people are almost entirely Christian, the number of the followers of Christ is still very small; they are a minority group in every country. Judging by the past, may we not reasonably expect that at some day, soon or far distant, a crisis will occur which will suddenly alter the whole situation and we shall reap the reward of decades or even centuries of patient sowing? We do not know what lies ahead, but we do know something about human nature and how it responds to outside influences. Judging by what folk psychology and history combine to teach, we may be sure that when we carry the Christian gospel to a country we

[1] Luke 14:23 (A.V.).

are lodging there an explosive force whose repercussions none can gauge beforehand. God has his hand in what is taking place. The acceptance of the gospel of Christ is an event not unlike that which a number of the prophets called a "Day of the Lord." There is probably no Christian who has entered deeply into the meaning of his religion who does not look eagerly for something wonderful to happen; he has a kind of messianic hope which is the ineradicable heritage of the Christian. Unfortunately, this hope has been spoiled for many by the extravagant "schemes of the ages" which are far removed from the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ as we see him in the gospels, but beyond and above all these there still remains the glow of Christian expectancy as we look out into the future and see God at work in the world bringing to fruition what is being done in faith by his evangelists everywhere. Can we escape the thought that there is

> . . . . one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves?

It was during this period of a thousand years that Christianity lost many of the lands in which it had been the dominant religion. Islam, the religion of Mohammed, arose in Arabia in the first half of the seventh century and made its conquering way until Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, Egypt and the entire coast of North Africa, had become almost entirely Moslem. How could this be? The immediate explanation is that this new religion burst out of the narrow confines of its desert home in Arabia and with unheard-of violence fought its way savagely and with unbounded confidence in itself and its future until its momentum failed and it could go no farther. It was a religion, to be sure, and the religious element was very important; but there were other factors. Dr. P. K. Hitti, in his *History of the Arabs,* calls attention to the economic factor which had much to do with the movement. It was, as he says, the last of the great Semitic migrations out of the cradle of the Semitic race, Arabia. They had occurred periodically from times before history was recorded. The Semitic Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Arameans, and the Hebrews were among those who could look back to Arabia as their original home, an inhospitable de-

sert over much of its area, incapable of supporting a growing population beyond very narrow limits, and once in so often casting out a portion of its people to find homes elsewhere. The Islamic was the last of these migrations, which, under the influence of a new and compelling religion, went farther and accomplished more definite results than any of the others.

So much, then, from the side of militant Islam. But what of the Christian Church in the lands where it was completely or all but completely replaced? This is one of the saddest stories in the history of Christianity. We do not know, of course, what might have taken place had the church been deeply alive and full of vigor. We might even imagine that there would have been no Islam. Mohammed was indebted both to Judaism and Christianity. It could even be said that he was in the legitimate succession of Old Testament prophets in his early days in Mecca. What might have occurred had he been confronted by vital Christianity goes beyond imagining. The terrible fact is that what did exist as the Church of Jesus Christ, not only in Arabia where Christianity was weak, but also in all the Near East, particularly in Egypt, was an attenuated thing, a poor copy of the original community in its strength and vigor. Kingsley's *Hypatia* will give the reader a vivid picture of the corruption, the party spirit, the cruel intolerance of what passed for Christianity in the Egypt of a century or more before Islam made its attack. How could such a divided church resist a united, enthusiastic body of fanatical followers of a prophet who had commanded them to fight to make their religion dominant? Add to this the visionless outlook of a church that had become satisfied with itself and had no thought of carrying the gospel to pagan Africa which lay just at its door. It takes an aggressive church to resist an aggressive enemy, even though the two kinds of aggressiveness may be very different. The danger of inertia, of the complete lack of the missionary spirit, of the divisiveness which made the parties in the church bitterly hated enemies—these dangers have never been displayed so effectively as in the terrible debacle at the time of the Islamic advance. Fruitless discussion and even bloody warfare over points in the metaphysics of theology, coupled with the lack of interest in carrying the gospel to the regions beyond, could not develop the re-

quired loyalty among men and women when another religion appeared which promised them release from their bickerings and oppression—and which was out to win! [2]

This is the reverse of the coin, let us take another glance at the obverse. Long before the Middle Ages closed, the religion of Europe was Christianity. Indeed, the period was called "the Age of Faith." The church was dominant, the Greek Orthodox over the east and the southeast, the Roman Catholic over the west and the north. It was a clean sweep. Everyone submitted to the authority of the church, at least in things spiritual. The doctrines of Christianity received unqualified acceptance, and no one thought of questioning the right of Christian ethics to its place of supremacy in the relations of men and nations. It was the great era of Christendom, when all the people lived in lands which acknowledged their allegiance to the Crucified. And so the Middle Ages closed. There were ominous rifts in the sky. The Renaissance with its resurgence of paganism was in the offing, and the Protestant Reformation was about to disrupt the church and bring in a new era in religion; but both of these belong to the age that was dawning and not to the strange, inconsistent age through which Europe and the Christian faith had been passing.

[2] See Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (2nd ed.), p. 452; also Addison, *The Christian Approach to the Moslem,* esp. Part I.

Chapter X

THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN THE MODERN WORLD

WHY DID THE ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONARY EXPANSION BEGIN AT ONCE after the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century, while Protestant activity lagged for two centuries? To give an adequate answer to this question is to enter into the meaning of both the political and religious life of Europe at the time of the Reformation.

To do this it is necessary to go back to the end of the fifteenth century and study the most important events in the great age of discovery. In 1492 Columbus discovered America, and in 1498 Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and opened up the sea route to India and the East. Columbus was a Genoese in the employ of the Spanish queen, Isabella. Vasco da Gama was a Portuguese, and his feat was the carrying out of the dream of Prince Henry the Navigator, who for years sent ship after ship down around the west coast of Africa hoping to find a way to the famed Spice Islands of the East. Naturally it was these Roman Catholic countries which first came into contact with the newly discovered world and sent their missionaries to America and the East. We must remember that it was only a year after the discovery of America that the pope drew the famous "line of demarcation" north and south in the Atlantic Ocean, by which he divided the new world between Spain and Portugal "on the condition that the inhabitants should be made Christians." [1] This line was soon moved farther west, so that Portugal, which was assigned everything east of the line, found itself in possession of Brazil, for now the line cut widely across a part of South America instead of being just over its eastern coast line. Much is explained by this transaction. Not only is Brazil Portuguese-speaking today but Portugal was able to carve out for herself a huge empire in the East, only remnants of which are left to her today. It also explains why the Philippines, out in the East, so

[1] Warneck, *History of Protestant Missions* (3rd Eng. ed.), p. 7.

close to the Portuguese possessions, should have become Spanish. Magellan, the Spanish navigator, going west and south, found and passed through the straits which bear his name at the southern extremity of continental South America and, still continuing west, came to the Philippines, of which he took possession in the name of the King and Queen of Spain.

No wonder Spain and Portugal were interested in all these lands and their peoples. Strange as it may seem to us, the voyages of discovery were undertaken for missionary as well as political and economic purposes. The opening sentence in Otis Cary's *A History of Christianity in Japan* makes this statement: "The first attempt to carry the gospel to Japan was made by Christopher Columbus." [2] He did not know there was a great continent lying between Europe and Asia; so he thought he would reach the islands off the east coast of Asia, islands which Marco Polo had called "Zipangu" (our Japan). But on the way he ran into another continent—and America was discovered. The inhabitants of the islands where he first landed he called Indians, and the islands, Indies, still under the wrong impression that they were in the East near India. They are now called the West Indies to distinguish them from the East Indies, which the Portuguese reached by coming around the globe the other way.

While the Roman Catholics to the south were thus colonizing and evangelizing their new possessions, the Protestant countries to the north, Holland and England, had not yet become sea powers of any importance. But their day was soon to come. England entered upon her career as a sea power with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, and not long after that we come to the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 and the founding of the Plymouth Colony in 1620. After that the balance was more nearly equal, and England and Holland were in conflict with Spain and Portugal both in the East and the West. Almost at once, as we shall see, certain kinds of missions were undertaken which have much light to shed on the conduct of the missionary enterprise.

So the age of discovery bore close relationship to Christian missions

[2] Vol. I, p. 13.

by opening up a new world to the enterprise. There is also another side to this relationship which is most significant. Christian Europe had been in dense ignorance about the East and Africa because of the barrier of Mohammedanism. It is hard for us to realize this today. One of the evidences of this hazy knowledge is the tradition of the Kingdom of Prester John which was abroad in Europe during the later Middle Ages. According to this tale there existed somewhere in Central Asia, or just somewhere in the East, a mighty Christian kingdom under the just and righteous rule of the benevolent King Prester John. There was untold wealth in his domains, and his people were happy and contented. The people in Europe did not know where this fair land was located, but they were sure it existed—so dense was the ignorance of conditions beyond the Islamic barrier. When all these stories are sifted down, it now appears probable that the country of which they were thinking was the mountain kingdom of Abyssinia in Northeast Africa, nominally a Christian kingdom, to be sure, with an interesting history, but very far from being the fabled Kingdom of Prester John.

So there was Islam, stretching across North Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, encircling the entire eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and from these shores continuing through Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia, thus effectually blocking intercourse between Europe and the East. The relations between Christian Europe and Islam had never been friendly. The audacity and ferocity of the Crusades had killed any possibility of fellowship. Only the rewards of commerce furnished the incentive to any kind of contact which was not warlike. This contact was undertaken on the part of Europe by the maritime cities of Venice and Genoa, and they became the purveyors of the goods of the East to the cities of Europe. They sent their galleys to the ports of the Levant in the eastern Mediterranean and exchanged the manufactured articles of Europe for the much coveted silks and porcelain of China, the peacocks and parrots of India, the spices from the Spice Islands, and hundreds of other items highly prized in the cities of Europe. But all this trading must be done through Moslem middlemen who brought their wares by camel caravans out of the unknown East to the ports of the Mediterranean. What if Europe could

only find a way around Africa and have immediate access to the markets and the producers in the East? And that was what took place. The sea route to India made it unnecessary to deal with the hated Moslems, and the commercial outlook of Europe was changed almost overnight. Genoa and Venice lost their pre-eminence, and Portugal and Spain entered their great era of prosperity. Along with this went an immediate increase of knowledge of the East. Again, very naturally, it was Roman Catholic Europe which took the earliest advantage of the new opportunity commercially, politically, and religiously. The newly founded Jesuit order sent its members with the traders and the political agents and was at work in a surprisingly short time. Francis Xavier landed in India in 1542, did a notable work there, but was not satisfied. He was restless to go on. He landed in faraway Japan in 1549 and died three years later on an island off the coast of China.

What was Protestantism doing these years? It might be supposed that with the life and energy born of new spiritual insights the Protestant leaders would have sprung to the task, but the story is very different. We have already shown how differently situated geographically the Protestant nations were from the Roman Catholic. That helps us to understand in part the inertia on the part of Protestantism, but there is much left to explain. Of course, the new movement was fighting for its life and was seeking to organize and settle itself, theologically and otherwise, in the lands reached by the Reformation; but again this does not explain all. Strange to say, there were theological difficulties which effectually barred the way to missionary action.

Luther's attitude is most informing.[3] A world-wide mission to the heathen was not in his ken. His idea was that the heathen were "the non-Jewish nations which had entered the Christian church; . . . . amongst *them* the Gospel must ever have freer course."[4] So far as the non-Christian world was concerned, his view was so limited that he could believe "that Christianity had already fulfilled its universal calling to be the religion of the world."[5] He thought he could prove this

[3] See Warneck, *op. cit.*, chap. i.
[4] Quoted *ibid.*, p. 10.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

from Scripture. Did Paul not say (quoting from Psalm 19:4): "But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."[6] Also: "The gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister."[7] Besides, Luther could not believe that Christianity could ever be the dominant religion everywhere. His reason was that "the Devil will never let that come to pass."[8] He thought that a man ought always to declare his faith and preach the gospel wherever he might find himself, but he was convinced that there should be no sending of missionaries—that belonged to the original apostles alone, and they had performed the task! Luther was also in the clutches of a rigid eschatological scheme. He calculated that the end was near at hand and that Christ would return in 1558; so there would really be little time to go very far. In fact, if the people scattered over the world did not have the gospel now, it was their own fault. They had all had the opportunity to accept it, and there was no obligation to take it to them again. But behind all this strange reasoning was Luther's idea of election. God knows his own, and we must not meddle with his plans: he saves men and women by his sovereign grace, and that is about all that can be said or done.

The position of the other reformers was not very different. Only occasionally did any one of them seem to sense the idea that the original apostles could not, in the nature of the case, have finished the task. They could not see that the obligation rested on "the whole church in all subsequent times." This, however, was the opinion of the Dutch reformer Saravia, who died in England in 1613 as Dean of Westminster. John Calvin was just as rigid as Luther in his insistence that the work of reaching the non-Christian world was God's task alone. He added, however, a statement which had far-reaching influence on the action of the countries which were colonizing in America and in Asia. He declared that Christian magistrates had a duty resting on them to propagate their religion in the territories over which they were appointed as governors. This was to bear fruit in a few

[6] Rom. 10:18.
[7] Col. 1:23.
[8] Warneck, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

years with results which have much to teach concerning the conduct of the missionary enterprise and the relation of missions to the state. In the meantime the period between the Reformation and the rise of a new religious life in the eighteenth century continued to be sterile so far as missions in the Protestant lands were concerned. There were little stirrings here and there but no significant movement. For the most part, the leadership was dogmatically opposed to the thought. One shining star appeared on the horizon in the person of Baron Justinian von Weltz (born 1621), the scion of a noble Austrian family. He believed the obligation rested on all Christians to propagate the gospel; he carefully refuted objections to his proposal, formed a plan to send missionaries, and finally went himself "to Dutch Guiana, where he soon found a lonely grave." [9] A very significant feature of his contention was his argument based on the example of the Roman Catholics. As Warneck says, "In the Catholic polemic against Protestantism, the reproach that the churches of the Reformation did no missionary work played a significant part. . . . . Weltz is the first Protestant who acknowledges the justice of the Catholic reproach, and, because he feels it painfully, he makes of it an argument for the undertaking at last of missionary work on the part of Protestantism." [10]

It was a pretty hopeless situation, not unrelieved however by rays of light from other quarters. The Puritans, driven out of England, went to New England. They were not long in planning to convert the Indians. The seal of the Massachusetts Company in 1628 pictured an Indian saying, "Come over and help us." Then came the Indian wars which made impossible any lasting results. The Pilgrims did not want to fight the natives but in the end thought there was no other alternative, owing to the fault of settlers who saw in the Indian only a dangerous enemy. Then, unfortunately, they all came to look upon the Indians as Canaanites whom they had the right to exterminate. The great luminary during this century was the heroic and scholarly missionary, John Eliot (1604-90). He has been called the "first evangelical missionary," both in his motives and methods. He translated

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 34, note.

the Bible, preached in the language of the Indians, was slow to baptize, organized churches and communities, and raised up native helpers. Despite the Indian wars his work went on, with its center in Natick, only seventeen miles from the heart of Boston. The Mayhew family for generations continued to work among the natives on the islands off the coast, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Besides this there were stirrings here and there but no lasting movement. We must now look in another direction to see how the slight leaven was working.

Holland was the first of the Protestant nations to contest with Catholic powers the dominion of the sea. The Dutch drove the Portuguese out of almost every part of their enormous Eastern possessions and laid the foundations of the Netherlands East Indies. Acting on the conviction expressed by John Calvin, the Dutch colonial government felt that it should assume the obligation to propagate Christianity among the people over whom it ruled. The Dutch East India Company defrayed all costs, the missionaries were company officials or employees, so that more and more the conduct of missions was a "wheel in the machinery of colonial government." Very naturally it became difficult to find missionaries. It seems not to have occurred to the Dutch church as a church to send out missionaries on its own responsibility. With our knowledge it seems easy to predict the outcome of such an enterprise, but it took sad experience to drive the lesson home that missions must be a voluntary movement if it is to exemplify the spirit of Christ. State control and an intimate connection with imperialistic ambitions were not productive of the fruits of the Christian spirit. Men went out on contract and were not deeply spiritual. The work was naturally very superficial, about as much so as that of the Roman Catholics under similar conditions. There was no inner spiritual preparation for baptism; people were sometimes baptized en masse, and even refined but effective methods of coercion were used to ensure a sizable list of results to report to the home office. Large numbers were enrolled as church members—as many as three or four hundred thousand in Ceylon, a hundred thousand in Java, and forty thousand in Amboina. But the faith of these "converts" was worthless. When the Dutch rule in Ceylon ended and came temporarily to a close in Java, only wreckage was to be found. A complete new beginning

had to be made in the nineteenth century when missions under entirely different auspices were inaugurated.

These were not the only colonial missions, but they are the most striking illustrations in Protestantism of a method which could end only in disaster. The thought of missions as the duty of the church was yet to be born. One sidelight has significance in this connection. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, went to the Georgia Colony early in his career to be a missionary to the Indians and also chaplain in the colony. It did not turn out well. His work among the Indians was a flat failure. He had still to experience the strange warming of his heart before he had a message for anyone, Indian or white.

This mention of John Wesley brings to mind the Moravian missionaries who were on the ship with him on his way to Savannah. They represented the true missionary spirit long years before the great movement in Protestantism received its impetus at the end of the eighteenth century. These simple-minded followers of the Lord Jesus were not affected by the waves of antimissionary theological polemic which chilled the outreaching impulses of the more highly educated members of the churches. The Moravians had a real religious experience, they took the command of Jesus just as it stood, and off they went to the ends of the earth; and they have continued to the present day the most missionary of all the Protestant bodies. A way had to be found to combine the simple faith of these Moravians and the normal life of the denominations with a highly educated leadership.

This came as a result of the Evangelical Revival in England under the leadership of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. The true spirit of Christian missions is always born out of a revival of religion. Toward the end of the eighteenth, and in the early years of the nineteenth, century not only did missions receive the impulse they needed but the antislavery movement under William Wilberforce, prison reform under John Howard, the founding of the Bible societies, the beginning of the Sunday School movement under Robert Raikes—all testified to the reality of a new current of religious life which followed in the wake of the revival. It was William Carey who touched the new missionary movement into activity. A most interesting feature of his approach was the necessity he felt to overcome the inertia

caused by the theory which had held Protestantism bound for so long —the theory that since the work of missions was God's concern it was not for us human beings to interfere. In 1792 he published his celebrated pamphlet entitled *Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens.* The significant word in this title, which sounds a bit queer to us today, is "means." Christians were not to sit idly by waiting for God to act but were to "use means" to carry the gospel to the "heathens." The Methodist emphasis on human freedom also made its contribution as well as the growing Arminianism in the Church of England. From this time the Protestant churches began to accept their responsibility and there has been no drawing back. The one query is: Why was it delayed so long? The missionary movement must have a solid theological foundation, yes; but, as we have seen, there are theologies and theological viewpoints which effectively block the missionary impulse and make it impossible for the missionary spirit to grow into active expression. So much of an explanation we may confidently make.

A new missionary agency came into operation in Protestantism, namely, the missionary society. In the beginning it was usually a voluntary organization, and in a number of cases it was interdenominational. Its philosophy was very simple. William Carey said to his friend Andrew Fuller, "I will go down into the well if you will hold the rope at the top." In other denominations with a more central organization the society became a part of the official program. But whatever the form of organization, the idea of the responsibility of the church at home for the support of those going to foreign countries was fully accepted. It is not the function of this volume to give the history of this development, fascinating as it is. It must only be made clear that in accepting their responsibility the Protestant denominations have worked out a vast organization which is intended to reach every individual church and every member. Special agencies to reach students, like the Student Volunteer Movement, have been an important part of the life of the church. It has been a most successful means of enlisting students as recruits for the mission field.[11]

[11] See Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View.*

What has been the result of almost a century and a half of Protestant missionary activity? Again, it cannot be a part of our task here to enter into a study of the vast field of advance and accomplishment.[12] But several conclusions must be held in mind as we proceed with our study. Almost every non-Christian land has been entered and to a greater or lesser extent occupied. The significant exceptions are Tibet, Afghanistan, and most of Arabia. The missionary has been able, especially within the last half century, to enter and establish his mission stations and to evangelize widely. The statistical results are important but must not detain us here.[13] We are far more interested in another aspect of the incoming of these men and women of every nation into the Christian fold. Has Christianity demonstrated in the modern world, as it did in the two previous periods of achievement, that it can be a part of the life of all kinds of people, differing in race, nationality, and location? Here is a far more important question than that of statistics alone. Can Christianity become truly "indigenous" to the culture and life of a people? We are just now at an interesting stage of this development. Without doubt it has been proved to the satisfaction of the keenest students of the problem that men and women of every nationality can become genuine Christians. Beyond that, churches of Christ have been founded, giving evidences of genuine Christlikeness, and in some countries a national movement exists with leadership which gives promise of continuous development and permanence. China is one of these countries. It has become almost a commonplace among those who attended the Madras Conference that the delegation which had the most significant contribution to make was the one from China. Similar developments are taking place in India and Japan, where leadership is being taken over by nationals, movements towards unity are moving rapidly towards consummation, and independence in financial control and in responsibility for the conduct of the work is showing remarkable progress. Taking all these facts into account, others would say with Dr. John R. Mott that if Christianity should be wiped out in Western lands, the whole move-

[12] See esp. Latourette, *Missions Tomorrow.*

[13] See Parker, ed., *Interpretative Statistical Survey of the World Mission of the Christian Church.*

ment to make the world Christian would start again with real promise of success, initiated by the younger churches in the so-called mission fields of the church.

And now in view of the whole course of Christian expansion what may be said? It has been put clearly and positively by the historian Latourette in his *Anno Domini:*

> Difficult though the task of exact measurement is, by the four criteria we have mentioned it seems clear that the influence of Jesus has been rising, that each peak in its effect has been higher than the preceding peak, and that each recession has, on the whole, been marked by smaller losses than its predecessor.[14]

The four criteria alluded to are: "(1) geographic extension, (2) new religious movements attributable to Jesus, (3) the effect of Jesus upon various phases of human culture, and (4) the extent to which individuals have been shaped by the inward religious experience which arises through Jesus."[15] Up to the present moment the Christian mission has been a success. It has accredited itself in the sight of men; it has given sufficient evidence that it is the will and purpose of God. It now remains for us to carry on the enterprise.

[14] P. 219.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

Part Three

CHRISTIANITY AS THE WORLD RELIGION

Chapter XI

THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL

If christianity is the world religion, as the christian world mission claims, it must have a message which is fitted to meet the needs of all men. What is that message? It is called a "gospel," a most interesting old Anglo-Saxon word. *Godspell* is a "spell" or story about God. But originally it was *gōdspell* (also godespell) with a long *o*, which made the word mean "good" and not "God." Then the translation became "good news" or "good tidings," and this is the rendering in the margin of the Revised Version.[1] In the German it is translated *evangelium*, which is taken directly from the Greek New Testament *euangelion—eu* ("good") and *angelion* ("message" or "tidings")—whence our word "evangel," the good news of the gospel.

To state the gospel fully would involve a complete review of Christian doctrine. Our aim is more modest: it is to make clear if possible what the Christian gospel is which the missionary takes to a non-Christian people as his distinctive message. In other words, he is the bearer of "good news" which will make men rejoice and be glad. What are the essential features of this message?

Probably the most inclusive declaration we can make about the gospel is that it is a message about God as revealed in Jesus Christ. There are many possible approaches to the study of this message. One of them is to proceed immediately to the experience of Jesus and discover what it discloses about the character of God. Let us deal with the record of his baptism. The account in Mark closes with the words, "A voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."[2] This is a very simple declaration, and we can appreciate its significance only when we note the effect it had on Jesus. "And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness,"

[1] Matt. 4:23.
[2] Mark 1:11.

and there he underwent the temptation or struggle over the meaning of his relation to God and to God's Kingdom which he now began to realize he was to inaugurate. What flooded over him was the revelation that he was God's son, and that God was his Father.

It was a new realization; it could not have been an entirely new thought. His knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures would make that most unlikely. Was it not said,

> Like as a father pitieth his children,
> So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him? [3]

This conception is to be discovered not only in the Hebrew Scriptures, but "in early Judaism we find the Fatherhood of God prominent in doctrine and piety: it is a common mode of address in prayer." [4] This way of thinking about God has had "an independent existence in Judaism up to the present day." [5] But nevertheless something new came into being. Such a relation to God was not a new discovery, but Jesus made of it an original contribution. To him it became the determinative and central fact in his thought of men in their relation with God. As Moffatt puts it, "A religion may call God by several names, but there are titles for God without which it would not be itself, and for Christianity the supreme title is that of 'Father.'" [6] In the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples they were to think of God as "Our Father." Jesus' relation to this Father was most intimate, as we may realize in a well known passage: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." [7]

In the religion which Jesus brought into the world there is no clear break with the religion which came out of the life of the Jewish people. What the Old Testament prophets had taught about God became the foundation on which Jesus built. The magnificent conception of

[3] Psa. 103:13.
[4] T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, p. 92.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 93 f.
[6] Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 94.
[7] Luke 10:22; Matt. 11:27.

one God, a personal God, maker of heaven and earth, who hated sin and loved righteousness, was as much Jesus' belief as it was that of Jeremiah and the Isaiah of the Exile. But with all that, Jesus' God took on a unique form in his own experience. He was the God of justice and mercy, as the ancient Scriptures had taught, but he was the God of the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son as well. The God who, as the Father of all men, made no distinction between Jew and Gentile; the God who went out after the lost sheep and cared as much for the one which had strayed away as the ninety and nine who were safe in the fold—by proclaiming such a God Jesus raised the conception to heights that it had never reached before. This insight of Jesus led Professor Karl Holl of the University of Berlin to say, "I have never understood how anyone could doubt that Jesus taught a new idea of God as compared with the Old Testament." And it is just at this point that he finds the distinctiveness: that God "offers himself to the sinner" and not to the righteous—this Dr. Holl feels is quite beyond "all religious conceptions recognized elsewhere." [8]

Christianity is a religion of revelation. All religions are in one way or another religions in which something is revealed. Were it not so they would cease to have an appeal. Men want to know what lies beyond what they can see and hear. The revelation comes in all sorts of ways. In some higher religions it has come in written documents. So it is in Judaism and Islam; and so, many would say, it is in Christianity. Our religion certainly has a Book, not only the Old Testament, which it shares with Judaism, but the New Testament, which is its own product and possession. A difference, however, must be noted. Christianity possesses a Book, but its revelation is not a Book but a Person. The Book is of value primarily because it conveys the Person who is the very core of the revelation. A casket is valued chiefly because it enshrines a precious jewel, not because it is a thing of beauty in itself. So with the Bible and Jesus Christ. Christianity is,

[8] *The Distinctive Elements in Christianity,* p. 17. See also a statement by Claude G. Montefiore, the well-known Jewish writer: "The summons not to wait till they meet you in your sheltered and orderly path, but to go forth and seek out and redeem the sinner and the fallen, the passion to heal and lead back to God the wretched and the outcast—all this I do not find in rabbinism; *that* form of love seems lacking."—"The Jewish World," in Foakes-Jackson and Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity,* I, 79.

then, a religion of revelation; that is, it is something which we cannot achieve in the ordinary processes of acquiring knowledge. It is an unfolding or an opening up of that which we cannot see or hear or know or experience or understand unaided by a power beyond our own human ability. That is, Christianity is in a fundamental sense supernatural.

Christianity is a revelation of God. It is not only a revelation made *by* God, but even more significantly, a revelation *of* God. It is in the deepest sense a self-revelation or self-disclosure. And it is made in the only way such a disclosure could be made, that is, in personal terms and by a person. Here we come very close to the heart of the Christian message, that Jesus Christ was such a being that God could be revealed through him. The revelation is partly in what he said and taught, for they are authentic expressions of his personality, but even more in what he did and was, for there is a secret of personality which can be conveyed in deeds and example and life attitudes as it cannot be in words and declarations. When we enter into the meaning of Jesus, we see what God is like in human terms—the only terms we human beings can understand. So it is, and so it must have been if there was to be such a revelation at all. Jesus Christ was a real man, of flesh and blood like ourselves, subject to human limitations and living a normal, typical human life. His human life honors human nature. This is what the life of man is capable of and what it should strive after. For God to reveal himself to man in this manner can only mean that there must be that in human nature which has some likeness to God. He is personal and so are we, and even sin has not so obliterated the likeness that God could not reveal himself to us in a being who is the revelation of himself and who is also understandable by us.

In making these statements we are really dealing with a double truth. Jesus Christ was a human being, our brother; and at the same time he was the revelation of God, who in his life and character made God known as he was. This is only another way of saying that he was both human and divine. The Christian Church by an unerring instinct has consistently reacted against any movement which would limit or deny either assertion. The pendulum has at times swung far in

one direction or the other, but it has always come back to the declaration that in Jesus Christ we have both the human and the divine. Christian theology has used its finest gifts to explain how this could be, though there has been no finality in its pronouncements. How could it be otherwise when we are dealing with human nature and with divine nature and both at their deepest? We shall and ought to attempt to make clear to the human understanding in each generation the mystery of the person of Christ, but whether we succeed or not is not of the highest importance. What we *must* do if we are to have a gospel to proclaim is to make others realize what we feel: that in Christ we are in contact with God himself, that God is like Jesus Christ, and that in him who is our Master we have the answer to the problem of human life and destiny. We may say with Paul that it is God who "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."[9] And we can say this even if we cannot offer a complete explanation of its meaning.

It is a part of the gospel that Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried, and also that he rose again from the dead. One of the surest facts in the New Testament is that Jesus' disciples believed that he rose from the dead and that he was revealed to them so that they could testify that he was alive. This can be said without going into the difficult problem of the resurrection narratives. What we can be sure of is that they were transformed by their experience and went out at once and began to preach "Jesus and the resurrection." He was for them no longer just a prophet or the Messiah. He was for them Lord. This title is incorporated in the earliest Christian creed, "Jesus is Lord,"[10] which expresses the conviction that he was not confined to the human plane but had a unique relation with God and was worthy of the same adoration. He became to them "God manifest in the flesh" and was now in the heavens as their Lord and Redeemer.

And this Lord was ever present with them. Jesus himself had created the expectancy that he would continue with them and had promised the abiding presence of his spirit. This experience of guidance and presence is one of the most marked features of the Book of Acts, as it

[9] II Cor. 4:6.
[10] Rom. 10:9 (Moffatt).

has been of Christian believers through the centuries. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is an integral part of the Christian gospel. The Spirit is spoken of by Paul sometimes as the *Spirit of God,* at other times as the *Spirit of Christ.* And at times *Christ* and the *Spirit* are used interchangeably. In one instance they are identified, "The Lord is the spirit."[11] That is, what the Christian gospel affirms is that God is not a distant being but is in actual contact with his people in all they do. He has been particularly near his servants as they have gone out to proclaim the gospel to the non-Christian world and the reality of that presence has been attested not only by them but by their converts in every country and in every age.

Man is a creature in need of help. The purpose of religion is to meet that need. He has needs that are physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social. They are not to be isolated as if each need might be met separately—man's life is too much of a unity for such treatment. Jesus recognized that and ministered to men and women at every level, seeming to make little difference what the nature of the need was so long as he could minister to it. And yet there is perspective in human life and consequently in human needs. They are all significant, and yet some needs reach farther into the center of life and affect men more deeply than others. The moral and spiritual needs of men as individuals and in society are paramount, and any gospel which addresses itself to humanity must make good at these points or be a failure. According to Christianity, man is a sinner and deeply in need of help. Its gospel must make effective contact with men who are in the throes of sin and who are struggling with poor success to rid themselves of its bondage. It must come as the good news that, while sinners may have lost hope in themselves, they have a share in God's love, the good news that there is forgiveness and healing and peace and enabling power to those who reach out in response to God's offer in Christ Jesus. It is Jesus who makes it possible for them to believe that there is a God who cares and that there is hope for them of a new life both now and hereafter.

There are several attitudes which are taken about man and his con-

[11] II Cor. 3:17. See A. C. McGiffert, *The God of the Early Christians,* pp. 31 f.

dition. A pessimistic attitude would have it that because of sin, because of Adam's fall, man is totally depraved—he has lost the nature with which he was created and consequently has forfeited his standing as a child of God. The theory is held in several forms, but all agree in seeing little or no good in human nature. It received its impulse in the Western church largely through Augustine, who looked upon the natural human cravings as evil, contaminated beyond recovery, and to be denied any place in a truly Christian life. Children do not come into the world as children of God but as children of the Devil, and such they remain during infancy until in the providence of God, if they are among the elect, a miraculous transformation takes place, when they receive a new nature in place of the old one received at birth. This position has become one of the distinguishing notes of the theology of Karl Barth. He starts out from a startling declaration made by Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian of a century ago, who laid it down that there is "an infinite, qualitative difference between time and eternity," that is, between man and God. "An infinite, qualitative difference"—think of the meaning of those words. The Islamic doctrine of "difference" does not go farther than that. According to Mohammedan theology, man and Allah are utterly different, so much so that man cannot be called a son of Allah, or Allah a Father, for that would involve a likeness of nature. There is, of course, a sharp difference between the Augustinian and the Islamic views at the point of the new birth. Islam does not even hint that such a change is possible; in fact, it definitely takes the opposite attitude, saying that man will always remain carnal as he is now and that the delights of paradise must be on the carnal level. The Barthian believes in the new birth but with no possible co-operation on the part of man with God in the process. God must "crash" into the life of man if he is to be saved and inherit the divine promises. Its attitude toward human nature is pessimistic.

There is a so-called optimistic attitude which is as devastating as the view just presented. Sin is looked upon as something unfortunate but not tragic, a serious inconvenience but nothing that cannot be overcome by human will power through application and training. There is no taint, no inherited malady which baffles the best of men. No

regenerating process is necessary; no reconciliation is needed between man and God. Human nature is pretty good and can be counted on to accomplish all that is needed in moral recovery and spiritual uplift. This view is receiving rough treatment these days in the presence of a warring world filled with lies and hate and in the light of an increasing list of murders, suicides, and broken families, all shouting aloud of the evil in the world and in the heart of man. There is little of good news for men in this attitude.

Over against both of these attitudes there is another which is surely more realistic. Man is made in the image of God and, despite all that he has done and all that he has lost, retains at least something of the divine nature and consequently possesses endless possibilities. But this man is also a sinner, out of harmony with himself, with his fellows, and with God, marred by his evil deeds and imaginings, needing to be saved from his sins. He is helpless in that he cannot save himself. God must save man if he is to be saved at all, but God has so made him that his co-operation is as necessary as God's grace. The terrible fact is that man can resist God's overtures, but this is the reverse of the shield. The other side, the obverse, is that man can accept the offer of God's grace and enter into the fullness of a new life, one so different from the old that it can justifiably be called a "new creation." This has been good news in every land to which the gospel of Jesus has been carried.

We must come a little closer to the total situation at this crucial point. Man in himself is not a success but a failure. What does he need? He surely needs a real and thoroughgoing renovation. What connection is there between the cross of Christ and man's deep need? Wherein does the good news lie in the story of Calvary? There surely must be a simple way of telling sinful men and women what there is for them and why they should be glad that Jesus Christ died for them. Let them look at Jesus on the cross. There is one who is suffering, not for anything that he has done that is wrong, but because of the sins of others. What a terrible thing sin must be to cause that suffering, which has always seemed to the Christian consciousness to be the suffering not of Christ alone but of God himself. As one

stands thus and enters more deeply into the meaning of what sin does his knees become weak, and he is likely to exclaim, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," [12] or, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" [13] But as he continues to look, another thought may come stealing over him—what love, what depths of love must have prompted God to send his Son that men might be free. How much God must have had in mind for man to actuate him thus to give himself for man. He must have penetrated far deeper into the meaning of man's life than man himself ever could do. And then the onlooker begins to feel the upsurge of gratitude and love in return for the love of God manifested in the love of Christ, who gave himself for us and for our salvation. At least that much can be said of the cross, and that is good news such as the world never before heard, which has come reverberating down through the ages as the "loveliest story ever told."

The meaning of the Christian salvation is so profound and so far-reaching that its fullness of meaning is often lost. How often it is preached as salvation from hell, having little to do with the present life and all to do with the life beyond. That the Christian salvation points toward the future no one would think of denying. What should be emphasized is that the experience of salvation is a present fact and is not to be relegated to the future. Were it not more than that, it would be in this respect like the Mohammedan conception that salvation lies only in the future, that it is a salvation from a terrible hell and to a beautiful paradise but having little or no connection with the life that now is. We are told that an angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him of the birth of Jesus, and then said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." [14] There we have it, the thought that we can be saved from our sins—in other words, from our sinning—which is a far cry from the conception just mentioned. It is a present salvation: it saves man from his evil nature; it puts him on his feet with his fetters broken. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. The things he once loved he

[12] Luke 5:8.
[13] Rom. 7:24.
[14] Matt. 1:21.

now hates, and the things he hated he now loves. There is light, and there is life such as he had never known before.

This change may come quickly or gradually, differing as much as one person differs from another. One thing is certain, the new Christian needs the help of the Christian community as well as of God; that is, he needs the church. The regenerating process in the case of the prodigal son had only begun when he came back and was received into the home of his father. It would take time for the scars of his life to heal and for the new life to take complete possession. Physically he must be built up; mentally new ideals must take the place of the old horrid memories; morally new strength must be exchanged for the limping will; and spiritually delight in fellowship with his father must become a fixed habit. It could not all be done in a day, but the conditions for this renewal were provided in the fact that he was at last at home and in the fellowship of his father. We are just as needy today but are in a somewhat different situation from the prodigal. We cannot come into the same kind of relationship with our Father as the prodigal could with his, yet we must have a real spiritual fellowship. We may have it in prayer and meditation through the Spirit, but for beginners in particular, and also for all of us, something more human must be provided. As Jesus craved fellowship with men as well as with God on the night of his betrayal, so we stand in need of both these kinds of contact. Christian friends and the Christian Church mediate to us the grace of God and provide that companionship without which the experience of the most mature and strongest is likely to languish. There can be little doubt that the establishing of the fellowship must accompany the proclamation of the gospel if the new religion is to last, have cohesion, and exercise an influence on the non-Christian community where it is planted. As it is today the little groups of Christian men and women scattered over the world have a sense of oneness and unity which does not exist among any other groups. They have been called "cells," living and propagating themselves and making it possible for Christ to be known as could not be done in any other way. We invite men to come to Christ; we also invite them into a fellowship. This bond has already demonstrated its ability to stand against resisting forces and to be an unbreakable chain which

binds the world together. It causes men and women to realize that to be Christians means to be bound together in a fellowship which will last through the ages.

In presenting the Christian gospel to those who are not Christian there must always be another feature in the good news. Men die and pass over into the great beyond, and our religion has always carried the message of comfort and hope. The confidence which Christianity inspires as men face death and the future has a quality of its own. At this point the Old Testament failed to meet man's deep need. Like other Semitic religions, before they came into contact with the doctrines of other religions about the future, Judaism had little to say about the condition of the dead; and that little was almost entirely negative. By the time of Christ it had gone very far in a positive direction, but even then an influential sect, the Sadducees, could deny the resurrection and any definite views about immortality. Christianity, however, had no misgivings. From the beginning it declared its belief in a conscious life after death. The resurrection of Christ stimulated the belief, and it became a cardinal doctrine of the faith. It was said in one of the latest books of the New Testament that it was "our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." [15]

It is interesting that Christianity should give secure confidence in the life beyond and yet say so little about the details of that life. That little, however, is very revealing. We are assured that it is a complete life, as full as the life here, where we have a soul and body in one indivisible whole. Paul rises to a great height when he says that as we have bodies here, bodies which are temporary and subject to inevitable decay, so we shall have bodies there, none the less real because spiritual. Paul felt he must make his Corinthian readers sure that they were not to be disembodied shades but would enjoy a life of rich fellowship in a beautiful community. The fellowship is first of all to be one with Jesus Christ, when "we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is." All tears shall be wiped away, and sin shall be no more. There we shall rise to heights impossible here, unencumbered

[15] II Tim. 1:10 (A.V.).

with the things which hold us down in our earthly estate. It is everlasting. We need not have the haunting fear that we shall ever enter into any other and inferior state of being. That is forever banished. But through it all it is not the duration, the everlastingness, which is stressed. It is the quality of the life, which is called eternal, a life lived with Christ, of a kind which makes it a priceless boon, that is pictured in the New Testament. Is there any other name by which Jesus is known which surpasses that which we Christians use so little, the Lord of Life? It is life and more life that shall be ours forever.

The gospel of eternal life, of which Christians have the assurance, becomes good news wherever it is carried to a pagan land. There are few times when the gospel can be more effectively preached than at a Christian funeral. The effectiveness lies partly in what is said but even more in what is seen in the eyes and felt in the attitude of those who have been bereaved. There is hope and quiet confidence, unlike anything which has been known in these lands when death has come. Hope is almost solely a Christian word and becomes a most significant part of the good news as it is taken to those who have not known Christ.

Chapter XII

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

WHY SHOULD WE CARRY THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL TO THOSE WHO HAVE not heard of Jesus Christ? The motive must be very strong and urgent, for missions are a daring and expensive enterprise and should be undertaken only for the best of reasons.

One reason has been frequently given and still actuates men who promote the missionary cause. It deserves careful consideration, for it is repudiated by some as a motive as heartily as it is advocated by others. We carry the gospel, say the advocates, to those who do not know Jesus Christ because they will be eternally lost if they do not have the opportunity to hear about him and accept him as their Savior. There are two questions involved here. One is the whole question of eternal punishment and hell, and the other is the justification of the use of fear of punishment as a motive of conversion.

The lurid pictures of the torments of hell which have appeared on the pages of Christian writers have for the most part disappeared. This is not to say that the belief in some form of future punishment has gone along with the crude and revolting portrayals. There is a persistence of conviction as to an ineradicable cleavage between those who espouse righteousness and those who have chosen evil which is very impressive. The very fact that a volume entitled *What is Hell?* should have been published in 1930 is in itself an evidence of interest in the subject; it becomes the more significant when note is taken of the writers who consented to contribute to the symposium. One might expect a convert to Roman Catholicism like William E. Orchard to declare his adherence to the traditional doctrine of his church, and one might expect other churchmen like James Moffatt and W. R. Inge to take part in the discussion; but when Sir Oliver Lodge, Abbot Butler, Warwick Deeping, Mrs. Annie Besant, and other representatives of the most diverse views join with their fellow writers in dealing

with the subject, he comes to realize that he is in contact with an important issue which stubbornly refuses to be left in the discard. And when all of these writers declare that they believe in hell, it is most revealing. In no case is it the old hell of fire and brimstone; but in each case there is an insistence that right and wrong are inalienably and eternally opposed to each other and that under no consideration can they be made to merge in a common third term or be reduced to a common denominator.

But the question which impinges on the missionary motive has not been touched. Can one justifiably claim that a man is hopelessly consigned to eternal punishment, no matter how earnestly he has striven to be a good man, for the one reason that he has not heard of, and therefore has not accepted, Jesus Christ? Immediately everything noble and just and Christian in one's breast rises in repudiation of such a declaration. Yet men are so held in the grip of a theory that they find themselves unable to break loose and come out into a more reasonable and Christian position. Their logic is iron-bound. They quote Acts 4:12: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved," and continuing with the proof-text method, quote John 3:18: "He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God," and John 3:36: "He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Surely that is the word of God, and that clinches the argument!

But think for a moment what is involved. One who is eager to be a good man is consigned to the same fate as those who are utterly different from him in the moral texture of their lives, and all because, through no fault of his own, he has never had the opportunity to hear of Jesus Christ! How Jesus would have scorned the thought, with its injustice and callous indifference to moral distinctions. What kind of monster does it make of God who would be party to the condemnation of a person who admittedly could not have known of the offer of salvation and a new life? It is a pity that such a consideration should have to be dealt with seriously. God is just; God is love; he

cannot be unjust, and he cannot be unloving—these are the primary postulates from which we must start in every discussion which involves the character of God and his dealings with men. But when this has been stated there still remain several problems which come out of the very position we have taken.

Why should we feel any urgency to carry the gospel to non-Christians if they are not under the condemnation of God because they have not heard of Christ? Will they not ultimately arrive at the same goal, that is, those who desire good and seek it in the best way they know? Bishop Randolph S. Foster was asked that question many years ago when he was teaching in Drew Theological Seminary. His answer was in essence this: I present the gospel to the man in the non-Christian world for the same reason that I present it to my son—because he needs it. If my son, in the midst of a Christian environment and with a long Christian tradition behind him, needs the gospel, how much more the man in a pagan land who has none of these things. He may come out in the same way ultimately, but that is not quite the point. He is in desperate need now, and it would be mere hardness of heart to withhold a message which has in it the possibility of release and freedom and peace. Henry Drummond once declared that being lost is not so much a question of the future as of the present. If a man in a forest is lost, he is lost now, his condition of being lost lying in the fact that he does not know where he is and cannot find his way out. Whatever may be said of the future, men and women in the non-Christian lands are now in dire distress far more serious than they themselves realize.

And still we must be patient. There are those who are not out in the full light and who deserve an answer not yet given. How, oh, how can men be thought of as moving toward the true light which ultimately comes from Christ who know nothing about him? Of course the answer must be that they cannot have what we know as a Christian experience. Such an experience must be mediated by Jesus Christ himself through his Spirit and that is impossible without the knowledge of his life and passion and resurrection. But let us for a moment look at the question psychologically. How is any man saved? He must be saved by God and not by himself, as every Christian would

testify, but what goes on in the mind of the man himself? He is saved by his attitude toward the best he knows, which is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. We call that attitude one of faith. But what of the man who desires the good and yet has not heard of Jesus Christ? How many missionaries can call to mind men and women who have come to them and with eagerness testified that Jesus was to them the answer to the longings and desires which they had felt for long years before they had heard the message of his love. How can this attitude on their part be differentiated in direction and essential meaning from that of the man who has already known Christ? Each reached out in his own way to the best he knew, each was doing all he knew how to do, one, to be sure, with a richness of experience impossible to the other. When the pagan finally heard of Jesus Christ it was as a complete fulfillment of all he had hoped for. Should he have died before he came to know what Christ might mean for his life, there could be no doubt that as he wakened in the new life Jesus would be to him the fulfillment of that which was impossible during his life here, through no fault of his own.

It is easy to oversimplify the situation, as is often done. The man, it is often said, would be saved by just doing the best he knows. That, however, is too rigid a test, for us as well as for him. If we are to be saved by doing the best we know, we would all fall short. That is the tragedy of the moral life; we fail to carry out what we know we ought to be and do. We must not put a sterner test before the man who has never heard of Christ than before ourselves who have all the advantages of contact and fellowship with him and with those like-minded with ourselves. We are not saved by what we do, though we must strive constantly to do what is right; we are saved by our attitude (faith) toward the best we know, which to us is embodied in Jesus Christ. And so of the man who has not heard of him; he is saved by his attitude toward the best he knows—which is as far as a human being can go. And when he does this he is in contact with God himself, we have good reason to believe. This thought has received classical expression in the words of the Prologue of John's gospel: "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming

into the world." [1] It is put more explicitly by Paul: "For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." [2] And it is stated more succinctly by Peter: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." [3]

There can be no doubt that the fear of hell has been a motive in missionary preaching. Missionaries have gone out to take the gospel to those who have not heard of Christ in order to save them from a dreadful fate and they have been urged to accept Christ on these grounds. How could it be otherwise when in the churches at the home base the same motive had been at work? But there is great need of caution in making the charge that this has been a leading motive. That has frequently been done in the past as well as in the present. Edward Gibbon, in a famous passage of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* charges that the early Christian evangelists "terrified and subdued by the menace of eternal torture." [4] His chief reference is to the fiery Tertullian. That this church father represented one attitude in the early church is well established, but that is not to say that Gibbon was justified in making his wholesale charge. In fact, Adolf Harnack, who has made the most thoroughgoing study of the missions of the early church, comes to a very different conclusion. He finds that the appeal of Christianity lay in "the simplicity of its nature," in its claim to be a "cure for spiritual and bodily sickness," "its work of charity," and "its moral earnestness"; [5] but nowhere is the motive of fear of future punishment alluded to. Speaking of Gibbon's quotation from Tertullian, T. R. Glover says, "The passage is a magnificent example of Gibbon's style and method, more useful, however, as an index to the mind of Gibbon than to that

[1] John 1:9.
[2] Rom. 2:14-15.
[3] Acts 10:34-35.
[4] Chap. xv.
[5] *Op. cit.,* vol. I, Book II.

of Tertullian."[6] That is, he has made Tertullian seem more rigorous than he really was.

We also know of the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, in particular the one on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," preached in 1741. Here the fear of hell was made the prime motive of conversion. It is no wonder then that Christian missionaries should have followed the leaders in the pulpit at home and preached "hell fire." The remarkable thing is that it did not become a more frequently used motive than it was. After going over the evidence in the whole course of Christian history, C. F. Rogers comes to this conclusion: "Indeed, it has been the labor in digging out and verifying most of the passages that has further impressed me as to the small part the belief in hell played in early Christianity, or, for the matter of that, in Christianity at any time."[7] Such preaching has figured in the past and it does now, but it has never been the characteristic motive of the world mission.

Christianity is the religion of the love of God in Jesus Christ, and whenever men have caught its spirit they have felt the constraining love of God so deeply that it has inevitably become for them the actuating motive in all their work. This has been true from the time of the Apostle Paul to the present day. It does not mean that the seriousness of the issues of human life and destiny have been forgotten but that those who understand the gospel have been captivated by God's love and have felt welling up within them the desire to share that love with others. At bottom the question of the missionary motive is that of the depth of one's Christian experience. When the love of God is shed abroad in men's hearts, the missionary motive is already present. It is the sharing of a precious gift which at the same time humbles and fills the heart with gratitude and thanksgiving.

Several attitudes which are sometimes found are really inconsistent with the motive just stated. One is the "crusader complex,"[8] which changes the motive of constraining love to that of conquest, and this always runs the danger of involving the missionary in the possession of an attitude of superiority. This is fatal. There must be no sense of

[6] *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 305.
[7] *The Fear of Hell as an Instrument of Conversion*, p. 78.
[8] Phillips, *The Gospel in the World*, p. 58.

merit or worthiness on our part which raises us above those to whom we go. The only significant thing which differentiates the missionary from those to whom he preaches is that he has in the providence of God been the recipient of a priceless treasure in the love of God in Christ, a boon which has so enriched his life and filled him so full of the same love that he cannot but share it with those who have not been so fortunate. A sentimental attitude is almost as dangerous as the crusading complex to the operation of the motive of genuine love. Keen-eyed realism is a necessary part of the equipment of a missionary. It will save him from the overemotionalism which makes it difficult to plant one's feet on the solid rock of fact, see the ugly things as well as the beautiful, and appraise needs and results in view of all the elements which enter into the situation. The missionary motive must capture the entire personality—intellect, emotion, and will—in a combination that will send the messenger of Christ out to a difficult field, keep him there during long years, and give him increasingly a sense of being commissioned to convey a gift which is continuing to supply his own life with a mighty dynamic and which he believes will do the same for everyone who hears and heeds the gospel he proclaims.

That other and subsidiary motives are living forces in the lives of missionaries is very evident. There is the humanitarian motive, which sees all kinds of needs and seeks to meet them in many forms of endeavor. They have been very near the heart of the missionary enterprise. The call of ignorance and illiteracy is heard by every missionary in a foreign land, and he would be a strange follower of Jesus who would not respond by doing all in his power to meet it. The result is that schools of all kinds have sprung up in the path of the pioneer in every mission field. The same is true of the call of suffering and distress. In fact, the doctor has often preceded the teacher. The example of Jesus, who went about doing good and healing those who were brought to him, points the way. It would have been impossible for Christians not to give themselves to minister to the bodies of men and women so greatly in need. And so it has been with other forms of service. The call of a need has seemed to be the call of Christ to meet that need, whatever it was. The important point is that it is doubtful if the humanitarian motive would have led men

and women by the thousands to give their all to serve their fellows had it not been united with, and come up out of, the deeper religious motive, which in reality embraces the others. After all, it is the religious motive which is determinative and characteristic. We may say with assurance that the world mission would not have come into being nor continued through the centuries had it not been for religious conviction and experience. The classic statement of the Apostle Paul is a fitting summary of all that can be said of the basic missionary motive: "For the love of Christ constraineth us. . . . . But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. . . . . We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God."[9]

While there has always been an emphasis on the individual appeal of the gospel, what we now know as the social gospel has not been entirely neglected. It is true that the Early Church did not consider its task that of making the Roman Empire a more fit place for men and women to live in. Their duty was to save the individual from the corrupt society in which he found himself and not to save the society itself. But even in that early period the church undertook to heal men's bodies, to take care of the poor, to give the slave a sense of his personal worth, and to introduce more humane dealings between men as men. In the Middle Ages the Christian mission was a civilizing as well as an evangelizing agency. The monasteries kept learning alive, introduced a settled life based on agriculture, and protected the weak; they were in general responsible for the ushering in of a new order in northern Europe. And when we come to modern times, especially since about the year 1800, increasingly there has been an emphasis on the application of the principles of Jesus to the various relations in human society. The process and the results cannot be dealt with here. It is ours to realize the fact and to show its relation to the fundamental Christian motive we have been discussing. The passion of our youth in colleges and in churches is to make the world a better place to live in. This has rightly entered into the program of the

[9] II Cor. 5:14, 18, 20.

world mission. And among Christian men and women there is also the conviction that a new and better age cannot be ushered in except on the foundation of Jesus Christ and his way of life for society as well as the individuals composing it. What is true of our own land is also true of Asia and of Africa: a new civilization must be built on the foundation of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, or it will go the way of all other civilizations which have tottered and fallen in the past. A deep desire for world peace based on the fellowship of different peoples working for the same goal cannot but enter into the motives of those who would carry the gospel of the Prince of Peace. It is now agreed that we must have a social as well as an individual objective, or we cannot promote the full-orbed gospel of Christ. Every relation in human life waits for a new setting according to a new pattern. The family, the wider social and economic relations, political life, and international affairs—all must be revamped. It is the Christian conviction that when the desired model or pattern has been found it can only prove to be that which came into the world with Jesus Christ and his message.

So then, if the missionary motive in its fullest scope and range is a religious motive, the very center of the philosophy of Christian missions must be concerned primarily with the relation of Christianity to the other religions with which it comes in contact. We carry the gospel to men of other faiths for the reason that we believe Christianity has something to offer which they do not possess. It is a bold claim, and yet without it the missionary enterprise would soon cease to exist. All other considerations are subsidiary to this main issue. If Christianity cannot make good with its claim as a religion in comparison with other religions, the compelling motive of missions is gone. But if, on the other hand, there is good reason to believe that men and women are handicapped and disabled and thwarted and that the condition could be essentially changed by the presence and acceptance of the gospel of Christ, everything appears in a different light. It is necessary, then, to give ourselves to a careful study of the other faiths in relation to our own—and to this we now turn.

Chapter XIII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

THE FINAL ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IS THE RELIGIOUS ARGUMENT. If it makes little or no difference whether a man is a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Moslem, or a Christian, why should we bestir ourselves to take the gospel of Christ to the non-Christian world? Further, if these religions, as unsatisfactory as they may appear today, are capable of reconstruction or adaptation so that they might give promise of providing a firm foundation for the new life which the people of Asia and Africa are beginning to live, what could be more futile than to attempt to introduce another religion, with all the difficulties and readjustments attending such a task? One of the valuable contributions made by Hendrik Kraemer in *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* is his statement that the non-Christian religions "are all-inclusive systems and theories of life, rooted in a religious basis," which "therefore at the same time embrace a system of culture and civilization and a definite structure of society and state." [1] To become a Christian in India, China, or any other non-Christian land is very different from joining the church or being confirmed in a country which has had a long Christian tradition. Becoming a Christian for the individual there means not merely abandoning one religion and accepting another, as though when the personal adjustment had been made—in belief, personal habits, and affiliation—that is all there is to it. Rather, it means a severance of ties which reach out and bind him to the social structure at a hundred points and which have molded him not only religiously but economically, socially, and in every feature of his intellectual and emotional outlook. It means more nearly a complete break with his previous life than we in a Christian environment can well imagine. There is more, however, than a shifting of

[1] P. 102.

personal relationships. The change reaches out far beyond the individual as soon as the Christian church is established and a new corporate life is introduced into a non-Christian land. The history of the missionary enterprise gives ample evidence, as we have seen, of the magnitude and depth of these changes—in the Roman Empire, in northern Europe during the Middle Ages, and in various places in the modern period. Surely there can be no justification of such a difficult and often painful process unless there is good reason to believe that no permanent results in changed lives and a better civilization can be looked for without it.

Instead of becoming easier with the passing of the years the problem grows ever more complex. A new situation has arisen which the world mission did not find it necessary to confront a century ago. There has been a tremendous growth in national self-consciousness and racial pride. Both of these movements have resulted in a more strenuous and more enlightened resistance to the acceptance of an alien religion brought by representatives of nations which are proud of their self-acknowledged superiority and which are, in several notable instances, the disliked overlords of those who are being asked by the missionary to accept his faith. Besides this, pride in their past, in the beauties of their own religious literature, and in the truths to be found in their beliefs has caused many to conclude that all they need in religion and ethics may be found in their own tradition. Thus they feel they may make the transition into the new world without recourse to what is strange and foreign and unpalatable. This is the attitude of an increasing number of high-minded men who have sincerely turned away from the blemishes and grossness of the religion in which they have been reared. Let us honor them for the position which they have taken. Not only is there this movement to rehabilitate the old religions, but there have appeared in a number of countries, notably India, what might be called halfway stopping places between the ancient beliefs and Christianity. The new light has compelled them in spite of reluctance and conservative fears to renounce much in their old attitudes and practices, but the new faith has not appealed to them with sufficient force to embrace it. How long such a position will satisfy it is impossible to predict. While it is transitional

it is likely that such a tendency will embody itself in still other forms rather than diminish. The chaotic conditions in the world politically and in the minds of men give every promise of experimentation and trial of substitutes before again we can expect a settling down to more regularized patterns of thought and life.

Still another consideration has an important bearing on the relations between Christianity and some other religions. A more or less innocuous borrowing of Christian phraseology is found at a number of points. When Buddhist children in Japan are taught to sing,

> Buddha loves me, this I know,
> For the Scriptures tell me so,

it is so palpably an adaptation that no comment is needed. But there is much more than this. One can discover a borrowing which goes far beyond such surface adaptations, more subtle and often more difficult to detect. For example, the Bhagavad-Gita, commonly called the Gita, the "New Testament" of thousands of educated Hindus, is being translated these days into English by Indians themselves as well as by Western scholars. Their complete mastery of English results, in a number of cases, in translations of rare beauty. These translators often do not hesitate to introduce into their versions of the famous Indian classic phrases or even ideas which are not distinctively or originally Hindu, and they do so with no sense of incongruity. We cannot refrain, however, from calling attention to the confusion which is inevitable. The missionary scholar must be on the alert to note these borrowings and is duty bound to call attention to the situation and to show the source of the ideas in the Christian Scriptures and tradition. And as Christians we cannot but raise the question whether such ideas can retain their vitality in an environment which is not congenial. They spring from a Christian root and it would seem that their continued life must depend on contact with their source, which is ultimately the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

We shall not get very far by calling the non-Christian religions false, as if that settled the whole matter and closed the question. That false things are to be found in all religions, Christianity included,

is only too evident. Great care must be exercised at this point. To say that false things exist in a religion is very different from saying that the religion itself is false. The weakness and perversity of human nature are sufficient to account for many things connected with a religion for which its adherents may blush with shame but which are blemishes and do not touch the essence of what the religion is at its central, determinative point. One of the gravest dangers in comparing religions is that of picking out what is reprehensible in another religion and comparing it with what is manifestly good in one's own, when it might have been possible to discover some splendid thing which is much more distinctive and typical. It is incumbent on the student of religions to analyze a religion and discover that which is central and determinative and characteristic. Only then is he in a position to make a fair comparison with another religion, which has likewise been seen in its essential features.

Religion itself, the simon-pure article, is never false wherever found. It is the deepest, the purest, the noblest thing in human life. Religion from the human side is the reaching out of a soul after what is the highest and best, after the higher power which embodies all the hopes and aspirations which enter the breast of men and women in different forms in all stages of their development. It is always a movement in the direction of God, however he may be conceived, in the darkened mind of a savage or in the thinking of a Moslem or Hindu or Christian. This is very far from saying that all religions are alike; they are different from one another in greater or lesser degree, at times at cross purposes and even antagonistic. It is to say, however, that in dealing with religion we are at the center of human personality and that religion is the same everywhere however differently it may be manifested and developed in the various religions of mankind. Even this statement must be guarded. It might easily lead off into a sentimentalism which sees only the throbbing, longing heart of humanity reaching up after the true, the beautiful, and the good and fails to realize that there is also the cry of unfulfilled desire rising up all over the world, which the religions ought to satisfy but which so frequently remains a wistful longing or a despairing hopelessness which has received no answer to its appeal. The function of religion is to answer that cry. Do the

non-Christian religions provide the answer? That is the problem we now face. So, with all the dangers and pitfalls lying along the way, there is no choice but to compare these religions with our own and come to a conclusion as to their adequacy or inadequacy, and then to act accordingly.

As this volume is not a history of missions, so it is not a treatise on the history of religion or a comparative study of the world's religions. It is an introduction to the philosophy of the Christian world mission, and as a part of our purpose it is necessary to indicate why Christianity should be carried to peoples who are now adherents of other religions. There is much in the various religions which will not be our concern in this study. We shall give ourselves to discover what in each of the religions studied makes it what it is. There at the heart of each lies that which is characteristic. Going a step further, we must keep in mind the evidences—still undiscovered, it may be, to its own protagonists—of change and adaptation to new conditions, and discover whether they give promise of offering a salvation worth while. A religion can be considered only as a unified whole. We must look for the point of central allegiance which captures the soul and becomes the bond holding men and women fast, no matter what attitudes may be taken toward other features in that religion.

We shall not bring into our study all the religions of the world, not to speak of the sects and cults which come and go and do not deeply affect the main currents of religious thought and life. It is possible to see what the religious problem of the world mission is by taking up the great religions which present different points of contact and provide the typical answers which have been offered to the religious longings of the human race. Those which have been chosen are the religion of the animistic peoples, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, Shintoism, Islam, and Judaism. The approach is primarily to the people themselves and not to their religions. We take the gospel of Christ to Hindus, not to Hinduism, and so on through the other groups. This must not be an abstract study of the doctrines of one religion in contrast to those of Christianity, but the study of the religious needs of living men and women and the manner in which those

needs are met or fail to be met by the religions which claim their allegiance.

1. *Why Take the Gospel to Animists?*

Who are the animistic peoples, or primitives, as they are often called? They are the people scattered widely over the world who live under the tribal form of organization and are often thought of as savages. The tribe is the form of social organization out of which all the peoples of the world have developed in the course of the ages. Their culture has been described as traditional, natural, spontaneous, each of which will help us to an understanding of their life and thought. It is traditional: that is, they do not know how to read and write, so their culture is handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. This is an almost complete bar to progress. Always among such peoples the past, beyond the memory of living men, appears in the glow of imaginative construction. This provides no adequate basis of comparison and progress cannot be made. This culture is also natural: that is, it does not go beyond supplying the natural needs and desires of men. It has to do with food and shelter, reproduction and safety. It is a most circumscribed life and must remain so until some force from within or without jars them loose from their customary habits and starts them out into a new mode of life and thought. It is also spontaneous, in that their religion had no founder and no significant turning points. It is all a part of their total life, taken for granted as much as any other feature of their daily routine, for which they can give no reason and assign no cause.

This is the culture of the Negroes and the Bantu peoples of Africa, the Indians of North and South America, and the inhabitants of the island world in the Pacific Ocean and elsewhere. It is also found in scattered tribes such as the Ainu in Japan, the aboriginal tribes in West China, the hill tribes of India and Burma, the Eskimos, and other of the lesser peoples away from the civilized life of man. They differ in many ways, in religion as well as in social customs, but so far as their fundamental attitude toward the universe is concerned and their reactions to nature and the spirit world, they present an al-

most uniform front. They have a philosophy of life, if it can be dignified by that name, which comes out of similar reactions and ends in beliefs and customs of the same general type. They can be considered together with no injustice to any and with no distortion of the significant facts.

The problem of dealing with the animistic attitude toward life is far from simple. This way of looking at things is only partially laid aside when people cease to be animists and enter a wider and richer form of organized life. The city-state and the nation are based on very different foundations. Reading and writing always are to be found; chronologies are kept, and historical records begin to be preserved; division of labor becomes a necessity; the merchant and artisan make their appearance; a king is far different from a tribal chief; and the gods take on proportions they had not known before. Everything changes; it is a new life and a new culture. But with all the changes the people affected carry along more or less of their previous habit of mind. The "animistic apprehension of life" has a way of going around and coming in at the back of the house when it has been bowed out of the front door. It seems perfectly satisfied to do so, for it can continue to exercise its influence under other auspices just as well as when it was in control in its own right. This continues through the whole history of religion. The influence of the animistic attitude is to be found in all religions, Christianity not excepted. The many superstitions which still cling to the minds of Christian people are convincing evidence of the presence of irrational fears and dreads in their lives. Those which place a ban on sitting thirteen at the table, starting on a journey on Friday, and looking at the moon over the left shoulder are only familiar examples of a widespread network of animistic reactions still left in our communities.

It might even be said that the success of a religion in exorcising superstitious fears is a valid measure of its effectiveness if not of its truth. It is altogether true that the dominant philosophy, the real religion, a man possesses comes to the surface and asserts its authority when he is in distress and difficulty. Then he appeals to what he most deeply believes in and is willing to do anything, no matter how incongruous it may seem, if it promises relief. Judged by this test, no group is com-

pletely immune to superstition, but some are far worse off than others. Many have passed relatively so short a distance away from the purely animistic that these attitudes are perfectly normal to them. In Hinduism the people are roughly divided between the worshipers of Vishnu and the worshipers of Siva, but at the same time it is computed that ninety per cent of all Hindus are also worshipers of devils and other unworthy deities which have been brought over from the animism out of which they have emerged. They are Hindus, yes, but they cannot shake off attitudes which are basically animistic. The situation is somewhat the same among the Buddhists of Ceylon and Burma. We have it on good authority that with all that Buddhism has done for them, these people in time of trouble have recourse to their pre-Buddhistic spirit worship and look to it for help. These examples are sufficient to indicate that in dealing with animism we must have in mind many evidences of its sway which are found far beyond the formal boundaries of that attitude of mind—if it can be said to have any boundaries at all. So far as Christianity is concerned it must be left to each reader to determine for himself the extent to which these habits of mind actuate the lives of Christian men and women. They may be serious hindrances to the development of strong Christian character, or they may be more or less harmless inconsistencies to be treated humorously. At best, however, they are unfortunate "survivals" of a former period of superstition and should be shunned. They are more or less serious indications of a failure to believe in God's providence as being over all his works and over his people in every contingency, whether they start on their vacation on Friday or Saturday or sit down thirteen or twelve at the table.

It is now necessary to come to grips with the determinative factors in the animistic outlook on life and realize what it does for those under its influence. Animism, as distinguished from the religion based on it, is a philosophy or explanation of the universe. It is the belief that nature and all the objects of nature are peopled with, and possessed by, living spirits—hence the name animism (the Latin *animus* meaning "spirit" or "breath"). It is based on the principle of analogy. Nature is to be explained by the only principle available to the simple savage, which is that nature is not unlike himself. As he himself

what he is able to do by human volition. He as a living spirit can does things, so nature does them. Causation to him is explained by cause things to happen because he wills that they shall happen. So there must be spirits, big spirits as well as little ones, everywhere in the universe, which are causing to happen everything which takes place. Things, in other words, do not just happen; there is always the action of a spirit which explains every event. It is no problem to the savage that the spirits are invisible. No primitive people in the world have any difficulty at this point. Without doubt the phenomena of sleep and dreams must have had much to do with the rise of this belief. When a man dreams he seems to be loosed from the ordinary laws governing his waking experience. While his body remains in the spot where he lay down, his spirit has soared the universe invisible to his fellows. It is not the "shadow of a dream" to him but a real experience, as real as walking around and eating when he is awake and at his ordinary duties. This is the philosophy of animism everywhere, and it lies back of all he thinks and does.

Out of this has come his religion. Animistic religion is the relation which the savage has established with certain of the spirits of his animism. He has, of course, some relation to the whole of nature, but he does not think in general terms. He thinks very concretely and has his attention fixed on those spirits which touch his life and control his destiny. The sun and the moon are really very important and come within the scope of his conscious interest and worship, but he is more apt to concentrate his thought on near-by objects which more nearly affect his daily life. The spring which furnishes him with life-giving water and the date palm or the breadfruit tree which gives him not only food to eat but other necessary provision for his simple life—it is objects like these which are more frequently in the range of his conscious interest. He has a life to live, and he reaches out for help wherever he thinks he can find it. He wants children; he must kill enough game or catch enough fish to keep them alive; he must be able to defend himself against enemies; and he is in dread of calamities or diseases which will carry off his cattle or destroy members of his family. Within the circle of his interests his needs are imperious and demand

aid from spirits which he believes are in control of human life and its fate.

They are all nature deities—where else could he go for the help he needs? But being nature deities, they partake of the character of the nature from which they are taken. This is a matter of the greatest importance in our study. What is nature like? It can be as kind as a summer afternoon when peace and contentment come stealing into one's heart from the quiet beauty all around. Nature can also be as cruel as a tornado, the same nature which so short a time before showed another and very different side. Nature at best is not very consistent, and the same must be said of the deities taken from nature. There are some which can frequently be counted upon to be kindly; and there are those, like the devilish imps which bring smallpox, which are evil and only evil. But the chief difficulty is that even the best of the spirits cannot be counted on to be friendly at all times; that is, like the nature of which they are a part, they seem to be capricious and undependable.

Now when an animist lives in such a world and knows of no deity which is above nature and not subject to the irrational changeableness of nature, he is likely to be controlled more by his fears than by his confidence in the powers that be. And this is what actually happens.[2] He is not without some faith, both in his fellows and in the supernatural agencies which surround his life, or else life could not go on. But this is not his chief or controlling attitude. He lives more by fear than by confidence, and so cannot live a normal life. We are told[3] that the most remarkable change which takes place in the experience of an animist when he becomes a Christian is the realization that he is living in a universe in which there is but one God and that this God is a God of love who cares for his people. How different

[2] These statements can be made even in the face of the indubitable evidences that many widely scattered primitive peoples have a belief in a Great God or All-Father who is above their other gods and spirits. The difficulty is that these beings have little or nothing to do with the daily life and the attitudes of the people who believe in them. They seem to have no influence in calming the fears and alleviating the distress in which these tribesmen find themselves. They are almost as if they did not exist.

[3] See Johann Warneck, *The Living Christ and Dying Heathenism*, esp. Part III, chaps. ii-iii.

this is from a universe filled with spirits of all kinds, none of them to be counted on under all circumstances to be kindly disposed and many, if not most, of them evil spirits intent on doing men injury. Here we are at the central fact in the animistic attitude, and can realize the chief need in the life of the animist.

Fear is never an organizing force in human life; it is always disruptive and disorganizing. Neither the life of the individual nor that of the community can be built on fear. There must be trust and confidence, or else life is chaotic. This means that the savage must have some faith and trust, or else he could not have continued his life down through the ages even at the low level he occupies. But the only satisfactory explanation of his backward condition lies just at this point. He has little faith in the powers on which he must depend, and consequently little confidence in his fellows. The two go together and cannot be separated, acting interchangeably one on the other. The fact is that man is related to an invisible world of spirits, and in the final analysis all else is determined by his attitude toward them. Not until from some influence not previously known he comes to believe in one God who is actuated only by kindly interest in his welfare and who can be counted on not to change his attitude from day to day is it possible for the mind of the savage to expand. Only under such conditions can the group of which he is a part begin to develop into a society capable of putting forth the fine flowers of community fellowship.

The fear which makes the life of the savage circumscribed and to so great an extent futile is to be distinguished from the fear of the Lord which, we are assured, is "the beginning of knowledge," or of "wisdom," as the psalmist has it.[4] The fear of which we have been speaking is not the beginning of anything that is good. In order to make the matter clear it is necessary to distinguish two kinds of fear. One is the fear which leads to terror, being scared or frightened. This disorganizes life, filling it with dread and apprehension. Nothing can be done with a terrorized man until he is calmed down and can listen to reason. Even wild animals lose for a time their natural in-

[4] Prov. 1:7; Ps. 111:10.

stincts when they are terrified, as by a prairie fire. They run before it, predatory animals as well as those on whom they prey, with no thought except that of escape and safety. It is this kind of fear which in varying degrees controls the life of savage men everywhere. That is very different from the other type of fear, that which has for synonyms reverence and awe. Here there is the same sense of being in the control of a power which man cannot resist and which could crush him if it would—but with a vast difference. This power is a God of love, tenderly solicitous of human beings and always seeking to do them good. This brings peace instead of fear, trust instead of dread, confidence instead of apprehension. Out of it comes a new life of fullness and hope, a new life for the community as well as for the individual. With this wide gulf between the two kinds of fear the question might arise as to why they should both be called by the same name. The only justification would seem to be that one arose out of the other in logical and historical continuity. They are both attitudes toward higher powers, but one has been changed from the fear that disorganizes into the fear that builds up, from terror into reverence, by a change in the object of worship. To make this change is the basic need of the animist, and until this need is met nothing lasting can be done for him.

How does the animist approach the spirits on which his life depends? He does not reason about the proper attitude; he does whatever he thinks will give him help and ward off fateful results. But as his life is studied it is discovered that, unknown to him, he is making two kinds of approach to his deities with a difference which is highly significant. Sometime's he gives himself to genuine worship, when he prays or sacrifices to a higher power, making known his requests in a spirit of dependence and humble supplication. This is religion, genuine religion, though on a crude and undeveloped level. He supplicates the higher power as one who can answer his prayer or who may see fit not to do so. He is in his hands and must look to him for the boon which he so greatly desires. But there is another approach based on a very different attitude. He will at times be found mumbling incantations and performing acts which are believed to bring the desired results, not by the aid of some spirit but in spite of it.

The savage thinks he has learned that by saying this and doing that he can secure what he desires or ward off what he fears by a power which he himself possesses. He believes he has secured the key which will open the door, the device which will produce the result by its very performance. This is not religion; it is magic—one of the greatest enemies religion has ever had. It is based not on a sense of dependence on a higher being but on the power of coercion which man possesses and which will produce what is wanted without making request for it. It is achieving a result by a magical incantation or charm, the possession of an amulet or fetish, something which has its own potency.

This distinction holds good even though the two, magic and religion, are badly mixed up in practice. In primitive life it can scarcely be otherwise, for the savage does not see the difference. He is in desperate need most of the time and does anything which occurs to him or which comes down through tradition to bring about what he desires. But whether he knows it or not, the two attitudes are not only different in outlook but different in results. The path of advance is by way of religion and not magic. Magic puffs a man up because what is accomplished is done by his own ability or by what he possesses; religion on the other hand humbles, for the worshiper knows that beyond his own strength there is a resource on which he may draw to accomplish what he cannot do for himself. This brings out all those qualities of dependence on others, his community, and his God without which brute force and cunning come into the ascendency and the finer aspects of life are blighted. When even in higher religions the magical crowds out the religious attitude, as it did in Egyptian religion, there is a lowering of tone. Formal repetition of magical incantations in place of a genuine prayer takes the heart out of religion, for in magical practice it is not the goodness of the deity which is significant, but the correctness of the ritual, which forces the result by its own repetition. That point was reached in India even back in the Rig-Vedic period when prayer and sacrifice were efficacious, not because the god was pleased to answer the request, nor because of the need and sincerity of the worshiper, but solely because the ritual was correctly performed. The formula, the ritual, the sac-

rifice became more important than the deity to which they were offered. Nor was this all. The Brahmin priesthood, because they were able to produce such results by the correct performance of the ritual, came to be looked on as more important than the gods themselves; in fact, because of the power they wielded they were thought of as gods, gods on earth. No religion has completely escaped the baneful effects of magic. The sacraments in the Christian Church can be celebrated as if they possessed magical efficacy simply by being performed. Formalism in religious worship is a form of magic: it is the crowding out of genuine religion by the performance of the ritual, and saying prayers without the inner experience of vital contact with the God to whom they are offered. A man may feel better or have the idea that he has done a meritorious thing because he has gone through a prescribed form. In Christianity we know the better way and always have at our disposal the means to correct our error. The animist, on the other hand, is bound by his ignorance and is unable to make the necessary distinction. Yet ignorance does not protect him from the unfortunate influence of a practice which uses God for man's own purpose and in man's own way instead of receiving from God's hand what he alone deems it best to bestow.

Animistic religion is doomed, whatever we as Christians may do or not do. The effect of Western civilization as it is now coming into contact with the animistic way of life in every quarter of the world is a disintegrating influence. The old ways of acting and looking at things are disappearing. As this kind of religion cannot resist the general influence of a higher culture, so it is unable to resist the missionary activity of a higher form of religion. This is to be seen in the Islamic advance among the tribes of the Sudan in Africa; in the success which centuries ago attended the Buddhist mission in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam; and in the remarkable results of Christian missions in the South Sea Islands and among various tribes in Africa—not to mention many other illustrations in various parts of the world. But while this is true, we are introduced by these contacts to serious problems that were not foreseen. When the impact of the Western world unaccompanied by the Christian mission is studied, it presents a sorry spectacle. Military occupation and commercial and industrial enter-

prise, being soulless and having no concern for the moral and religious interests of the native peoples, disrupt the life which the tribesmen have been living from time immemorial and offer no new patterns by which they can develop a satisfying form of existence. Consequently, they are left in a worse state than before. This is one of the most serious problems before the statesmen as well as the missionary administrator at the present time. The native is in dire need of something, he knows not what. He is separated from his past, which is beyond recall, and he can see little or no hope in the future.

Reference has already been made to the fact that religions have been successful in receiving the formal adherence of animistic people but have been only moderately successful in eliminating animistic attitudes from their mind. This, too, is a serious situation. Islam undoubtedly raises the Sudanese tribesman to a somewhat higher plane than he has occupied but leaves him at that level with no possibility of rising higher under that system. In fact, at a number of points he is even worse off than he was before. The coming of Buddhism into Farther India did much for the people and their culture, and yet the question arises whether they were fundamentally changed in their outlook on life and the spiritual world. As Christians we cannot but feel that they are needy still and can hope for but slight alleviation under the dominant religion.

What of the effect of Christian missions among animistic peoples? The question of the relation of the world mission and culture will be discussed later; here the problem need only be stated. The claim has been made by anthropologists that the Christian missionary has succeeded in securing the allegiance of these people in many places but has disrupted the old culture and, very unfortunately, has not introduced new patterns in place of the old. The missionary has come to realize this danger, and anthropological training is becoming recognized as a necessary part of his preparation for work among animists. These people must begin the development of an almost completely new culture, based on a new religion but requiring in addition the guidance of those versed in their special needs and opportunities. They cannot go back to the former life, no matter what may be done or said. The Christian missionary is convinced that the foundation

of the new culture must be a new religious life and that on that foundation a cultural superstructure can be built which will carry the assurance that the last state of these animists will not be worse than the first but that a new life such as was never thought possible will open up before these simple yet wonderful people over the world.

2. *Why Take the Gospel to Hindus?*

Hinduism is a religious system in India including roughly between 235,000,000 and 240,000,000 people. The word is a religious designation; and Hindus are to be distinguished from Indians, the name for all the people who live in India, of whom the Hindus compose the largest group.

Hinduism is the most amorphous of religions, including within its ample bounds almost every religious belief and practice. It is hard to give a satisfactory definition of this religion; there are those who declare it cannot be done. Govinda Das, professor in the Hindu University at Benares, says that "Hinduism is absolutely *indefinite*." He speaks of it as an "anthropological process to which, by a strange irony of fate, the name of a 'religion' has been given. . . . . It is all-comprehensive, all-absorbing, all-tolerant, all-complacent, all-compliant." [5] The question arises: Who, then, is a Hindu? And the answer coming from this representative is that a Hindu is one "who does not repudiate that designation," or one "who says he is a Hindu and accepts any of the *many* beliefs and *follows* any of the many practices that are *anywhere* regarded as Hindu." In general, one may believe what he likes and do as he wants and yet be an orthodox Hindu—provided one thing, that he belong to one of the many castes and keep the caste regulations. This means that to hold his place in the Hindu community is a matter of conformity to custom, petrified in social organization.[6]

The Hindu is intensely religious. The Christian missionary does not take his message to Hindus to make them more religious. If anything, they are more religious than he is: that is, more things which they do are thought of as religious acts than is true in the life

[5] *Hinduism*, p. 45.

[6] See my *Religions of Mankind* (rev. ed.), p. 176, from which this statement is taken.

of the missionary. The Hindus have been spoken of as a "God-intoxicated" people, whose whole life is absorbed or even obsessed by religion. Not only is this true, but in the course of the centuries they have thought about almost all the religious problems which have confronted the mind of man anywhere and at any time. A missionary does not go to the Hindus to teach them doctrines which their religious philosophers and priests and wisemen have not already pondered and which do not lie embedded in some form in their wide-ranging religious literature. This brief statement will serve to bring out the remarkable fact that we are dealing with people not only deeply religious but profoundly thoughtful about their religion and its meaning. When we ask the question, Why take the gospel to Hindus? we are being introduced to the most difficult, the most challenging, and the most rewarding investigation of the relation of one faith to another. As much hangs in the balance in this study as in any other we shall enter upon in the comparison of Christianity and other religions.

What does religion mean to a Hindu? Back of everything else there lies the desire for release from the necessity of rebirth, from the bondage of transmigration. In the earliest days of Indian religion, when the hymns of the Rig-Veda were being composed and sung, there is no evidence of a belief in this doctrine, which is now universally held by Hindus. Govinda Das says of it, "This is the famous doctrine of transmigration on which all of our philosophy of life is based."[7] Where did it come from? That question cannot be answered with any assurance, but it is widely held by careful students that it was taken over by the Aryan Hindus from the aboriginal Dravidians, whom they encountered in India as they came into the country from the northwest. At any rate, it is the foundation on which all else seems to be built.

Looking a little closer, we discover that rebirth occurs according to the law of karma. The basic meaning of the word "karma" is deed or act. As applied here it means the deeds or acts which a man performs in the present life and which continue to act as an effective

[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 214.

influence from one existence to another without end. According to his karma a man is born into a new life favored or unfortunate, good or bad, rich or poor. There is no escape from the clutches of this inexorable law, and every Hindu looks upon this inevitable destiny as the one thing which it would be worth anything to escape. So important is this law in the thinking of the Hindu that Professor Das can say of it, "This law of Karma, as a man sows so he reaps, is the keystone of the arch over which has been built up, through the course of ages, the vast edifice of Hinduism."[8] Hindus differ from one another in a hundred ways, but they are united in their belief in transmigration and karma. To be released from the necessity of rebirth is the deepest desire of their hearts. All Hindu practice, cult, and philosophy has this as its purpose. Their priests have devised certain methods of release, or at least alleviation of their condition as they face future lives. Even though they may not expect complete emancipation, they hope to rise in the scale and have a happier life in the future than they now know in their present incarnation.

There are three of these ways of salvation or release which a Hindu may travel. One is the way of works, which has various ramifications.[9] Keeping caste regulations figures largely. That may not carry one very far in the journey toward emancipation, but it is looked upon as an effective means of alleviation. We must look at caste only sufficiently to realize how important it is in the Hindu system. A man is born into his caste according to his karma; so caste is firmly fixed in his life. It is the impregnable buttress of his entire social structure. The question arises whether Hinduism would be Hinduism without caste. The unequivocal answer which must be given is a vigorous negative. No one can say what changes may take place in the centuries and milleniums to come; but as far as it is possible to peer into the future, there is no prospect of a dissolution of caste or of significant change in its binding character. There are many noble Hindus who deplore its effects and realize that a united, progressive India is impossible so long as the heavy hand of caste continues to grip their life.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 217.
[9] See Stevenson, *The Rites of the Twice-Born.*

What they see is that caste kills the sense of brotherhood which is fundamental for a free, united people. This does not mean that caste does not have good things in its favor. Each caste is a kind of brotherhood and holds its members together in mutual protection and helpfulness. But with all this the indictment against it is weighty. The caste may be a brotherhood within its own ranks, but the very reverse is the attitude toward those without. There is a sense of inferiority in the presence of man of higher caste and of superiority toward those below. And as one goes farther down the scale, the cringing servility increases until the despised man at the bottom rung of the ladder, the poor miserable outcaste who has no standing at all, is utterly contemned as not fit even to worship in the temples of their gods.

The key to the whole system is the Brahmin priestly caste at the top. He is the lord of the land in social standing and religious privilege. There are outstanding patriotic lovers of India among the Brahmins, but relatively few as compared with the whole number of about nine millions who are classed as members of the caste; and these few are unable, even if they would, to affect the course of long established custom and habit of mind. The Brahmin is the proud, overbearing aristocrat, even though he may be poor and insignificant, and believes his status and that of the men of other castes is divinely ordained and irrevocable. What he is as overlord and what they are as inferiors is all to be accounted for by the all-embracing law of karma. Fatalistic despair has for centuries marked the man at the bottom, and self-complacent satisfaction the fortunate high-caste man. Each deserves, so they believe, what he has received, and there is no hope of any betterment—in this incarnation at least. So long as this condition continues, any agency which would seek to ameliorate the condition, especially of those at the bottom of the ladder, would be a blessing. Let it be said that a number of the political parties of India insert as a plank in their platform the raising of the condition of the pitiable untouchables. Mr. Gandhi can always be counted on to advocate the bettering of the lot of these millions. But only a brief survey of the history of the last seventy-five years will reveal the outstanding fact that it is the Christian missionary who has taken the task seriously and has made good in putting large numbers of these outcastes on their feet, giving

them a position of self-respect and growing importance. Had there been no other motive than lifting these people to a higher plane, not to speak of giving them a song in their hearts about Jesus their Saviour, it would have been sufficient to warrant all that has been done by self-denying men and women from Christian lands.

And as we face the future the same motive holds good. It would be an incredible thing for Christians not to go to the relief of people held down by a system which not only accepts the system as divine but is deeply opposed to any alteration calculated to weaken the position of the high-caste man. Great honor is due these bold men and women in Hinduism whose hearts have been touched by the condition of their fellow Hindus and who against great odds are looking and working for a better day. Shall the Christian missionary take his leave and allow the high-caste Hindu to do his duty toward his low-caste and outcaste brother? Would that such an attitude on the part of Hinduism were in sight. In the meantime there is nothing for the Christian to do but to go to India carrying his message of release and his practical methods of amelioration to a people so sorely in need. The terrible fact is that it is Hinduism itself as a system which continues to keep so large a part of its own people in bonds. Something radical is needed, the hope of which does not appear in the system which originated caste, sponsored it through the centuries, and continues to favor it. With the deepest desire not only to be fair but to discover signs of the radical change in outlook which is needed, the sad fact must be registered that Hinduism still remains intact; and so long as that is true, brotherhood and the rights of men as men will have little opportunity to develop. The gospel of one God who is the Father of all men and whose children are consequently brothers is a basal need of India.

We cannot stop here. Hinduism is so much more than a social system that we have yet some distance to travel before we arrive at its throbbing heart. The Hindu is profoundly religious: he cries out for God and can be satisfied only when he finds him. He wants deliverance—yes, deliverance from the enervating prospect of innumerable births. Many other thoughts are, of course, in the mind of the Hindu as he worships, but back of them all is this longing for emancipation

from transmigration. In the long course of his history he has roamed over the entire field of religion; almost every conceivable kind of deity and form of worship have entered into his life. But through the centuries his vast pantheon has been channeled into a sectarianism which roughly divides the whole body of Hindus into two groups. Hindus are today worshipers of Vishnu (Vaishnavas) or of Siva (Shivites). These two sects present the picture of Hinduism as it is today from the standpoint of belief in higher powers and their worship.

The Vaishnavas worship Vishnu, but not in his own person. He is approached in the person of his various incarnations (*avatars* in Sanskrit). There are ten of these, but the most important are Krishna and Rama, and even Rama cannot compare in popularity with Krishna. We are here brought face to face with one of the most significant illustrations of the remarkable insight of the Indian religious mind. The idea of incarnation is present, not unlike the incarnation idea in our own religion. But who is Krishna? That is the crux of the matter. India may have conceived the same type of religious idea as the Christian, but that is not the important point. The significant question is: What is the nature of the incarnation? what kind of God is disclosed in the person of the avatar or incarnate one?

There are two Krishnas in Hindu literature and thought. One is the Krishna of the *Bhagavad-Gita,* who converses on all the religious and philosophical problems which trouble the mind of the prince about to order his troops into battle and the inevitable slaughter. Here he is a worthy companion and wise counselor and utters many thoughts which any sincere seeker after truth might take to heart. It is to this book that Mr. Gandhi goes for religious solace and guidance rather than to any other. Were there no other Krishna than this to consider, the problem we face would demand another approach. But there is another Krishna, and he is very different. He is the popular avatar of Vishnu worshiped by millions in a thousand temples all over India. He is not an admirable character. He is said, in the legends that recount his career, to have had sixteen thousand wives and a hundred and eighty thousand children, his life being to a large extent an impure round of gambols with shepherd maidens on the hills. This is not

pleasant to mention, and many Hindus turn away in disgust from the puranas in which the stories are told. But it must be put down here when we are asking why the gospel of Jesus Christ should be taken to Hindus. One of the reasons is that Krishna is widely worshiped, and no matter how he is interpreted, the effect of his worship on the lives of his votaries cannot be morally helpful. "Like gods, like people" finds one of its most significant applications here. Those who worship Krishna, the Krishna whom the common people know as their deity, are in deep need of the moral and spiritual uplift which can never come to them in this worship.

This is true in spite of the fact that the attitude which his worshipers are taught to have is a very noble one, coming very close to that with which readers of the New Testament are familiar. It is called "bhakti," the primary meaning of which is devotion. It is an attitude very much like trust or faith, calling out the soul's deep devotion and heartfelt adoration in confident assurance of the presence of the loved one. Psychologically there is not much difference; it is not a long bridge from some aspects of the Christian attitude toward Christ to the Hindu attitude toward Krishna. But the likeness soon ends. The significant and determinative thing in worship is not the subjective attitude but the objective reference. What kind of God do we worship? What is his moral character? Is his influence uplifting? Does it tend to raise the character of those who give themselves to him in adoration and devotion? On all these counts the verdict is heavily weighted against Krishna worship. He is not a worthy object of faith, and so long as he is presented to Hindus there is little hope of new life and moral achievement.

This is one side of popular Hindu religion, but there are others. One is the religion of the Shivites, the worshipers of the god Siva. They are about as numerous as the Vaishnavas, and yet very different. Siva has no incarnations and is worshiped in his own person under the symbol of the phallus, which represents the generative function in human life. In the forms in which it is often seen, it is not offensively presented; but at best the effect is far from being wholesome. Siva worship has a long and varied history, coming out of the past and carrying along all kinds of inconsistent ideas. He is the object of a

not uplifting popular worship, and at the same time he is the subject of profound philosophic discussion. He represents the darker and destructive aspects of nature, and yet he is thought of as the light of life. There are many sides of the cult. Siva is also worshiped in the person of a number of wives—some rather mild and approachable; and others, like Kali and Durga, black and cruel and bloodthirsty. The incongruity of it all is most baffling. Kali is worshiped with bloody sacrifices in her temple in Calcutta, and she is also looked to by countless men and women as "Mother Kali," their kindly helper and comforter. Songs have been sung to her and in her honor which are worthy of a far better and more consistently high-minded object than this goddess, the wife of Siva. India has all the faith and devotion and religious passion of which any people are capable; what India needs is an object worthy of such marvelous response. Unfortunately, India has never, with all her religious genius, been able to arrive at a conception of God which is at the same time morally helpful and spiritually satisfying. Does it not bring home the thought which we as Christians cherish, that such a conception is not the product of human genius but a revelation of the Most High himself, and that it has been made in the person of Jesus Christ, his Son and our Lord? So long as Hindus are unacquainted with that revelation, they are bereft of the one means of access to that which is highest and best. That is the conviction of the Christian missionary, and that is why he is in India.

India is hungry; she is eagerly seeking a salvation which will give her peace and satisfaction. She has sought it in many ways, in austerites of the most varied kinds, in every conceivable kind of worship and practice; and yet her wistful eyes turn in every direction for new light and guidance. Her seers and wisemen early turned to philosophy as a way of salvation. In this respect Indian philosophy is different from that of western Europe. With us it is intellectual coherence and the satisfaction that follows which have urged the philosopher on to ever new solutions of the problem of ultimate reality. In India all philosophies are essentially philosophies of salvation. The ever-present dread of reincarnation times without number remains as a pall over human existence. The thoughtful Hindu turns to a philosophic solution of his problem. He seems to be philosophically minded as a

natural gift. No other people have been so deeply influenced far down into the ranks of the illiterate masses by the philosophical musings and conclusions of their daring thinkers as the Hindus. The man on the street is likely to give evidence of a bent of mind which comes as a surprise to the man of the West. What has all this led to?

There are a number of systems of Hindu philosophy, all of which are interesting and significant; but only one need occupy our attention here. It is far more pervasive than any other and gives a picture of the Indian mind more intimate and revealing than the others. Let us realize that all these philosophies are means of salvation by knowledge, in the form of intuition or insight—a flash of comprehension which conveys the revealing and saving truth. So superior is this way of salvation that the other ways are considered utterly inadequate to accomplish the desired end. That purpose or desire, as we shall remember, is to cancel the necessity of rebirth and end the long succession of existences. Keeping caste regulations, giving oneself to austerities, following the most careful regimen—all these will not lead to final emancipation. What they can be expected to do is to alleviate the situation, to accumulate merit so that in another life one may hope for a higher position and a happier lot. No matter how far they are carried, they are unable to do more: they are failures so far as a final break from the operation of the law of karma is concerned. The same must be said of worship, whether or Siva or of Vishnu. It is about all the common man is capable of, and he should not be discouraged in the punctilious performance of the prescribed forms, so the philosopher believes; but it, too, only leads to amelioration. Emancipation does not lie this way. The worshiper must rise to another level where not by cult practices but by knowledge he shall attain his desire and reach nirvana. This is a state where Karma can no longer touch him, in which he is far higher than even the heavens which the Hindu imagination has pictured.

What is this wonderful releasing thought? Here it would be possible to spend much time in giving an exposition of the Vedanta philosophy in its long history through the Upanishads and down to the eighth century of the Christian era when Sankara gave it the form which has persisted until the present time. The fact is, this philosophy

controls the thinking of more human beings than any other philosophical system anywhere in the world. A short statement must suffice to answer the question we have proposed: Why should we take the gospel to these philosophically minded thinkers as well as to the simple masses who faithfully worship at the temples of their gods?

The whole system has as its fundamental postulate that Brahman is final reality, the one and only reality. Brahman is the universe, and the universe is Brahman. But at least there seem to be other existences —ourselves, for instance. There is not only Brahman, the great world soul; there are human souls as well—what are we to think of them? Are they real, or if not, what are they? Here we approach the emancipating insight, the thought of thoughts. They are not separate existences at all, but are really Brahman itself. Yes, just that, with all its implications. We human beings are Brahman, all there is of Brahman, in the fullest meaning of the term. It is complete identity. The individual human atman, or soul, is not like Brahman; he *is* Brahman. He does not become Brahman; he *is and always has been* Brahman; he could not be Brahman more completely if he should live a hundred thousand years. But what about the thought that possesses me, that I am I, that I am an individual, separate self? It may be a mistaken thought, but it is very real. It is accounted for by the presence of a force in the universe called "maya," sometimes translated but not with fullness of meaning as "illusion," which has stood in the way and prevented us from seeing what has always been true. The flash of intuitive insight that we need is that of realization—realization that we do not exist as realities in ourselves, but that we are and always have been Brahman. When this realization has been achieved, everything desirable has been accomplished. We may live on a few years by the sheer momentum of physical vitality, a kind of physical karma, but when we die we shall not be born again. We have attained nirvana; we have dropped back into the ocean of final reality to which we always belonged, but from which we seemed to be separated by the nightmare of human existence. It is a world-denying, life-denying system.

But who is Brahman? What kind of entity is this final reality who is the very universe itself? We have a clue in the fact that the word

Brahman is a neuter noun, so Brahman is not "he" or "she" at all but really "it." The significant thing is that Brahman is attributeless. No positive statement can be made about this being. Whenever the question is asked whether Brahman is this or that the answer must always be *neti, neti,* "not that, not that." Is Brahman personal? Oh no, not that. Is Brahman impersonal? Not that either. If neither personal nor impersonal, what shall we say? We cannot give a definite answer, for he is without attributes or qualities. But what this means practically is that Brahman is to all intents and purposes impersonal, since he is not personal. And the Hindu philosophers admit it, considering that it would bring final reality down to a low level were they to think of it as personal.

Another question may be asked: Is Brahman good? or bad? and the answer in both cases is the same, "Not that." These philosophers would claim that being neither good nor bad indicates that Brahman is beyond and above the distinction between good and evil. We must realize what this involves. Is there a plane of existence, or can there be, above, and more exalted than, a state in which moral distinctions prevail? The answer which both Judaism and Christianity give is very decidedly against this claim. The God of the Old Testament and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a holy God who in his deepest nature loves righteousness and hates sins. He is a personal God who can enter into relations with his children here on earth and who cherishes them as a Father. To men and women believing in such a God and seeing human nature in his light, the deadness of belief in an impersonal being who cannot be approached in personal terms has no appeal. And when the thinking Hindu finds no support for his moral and social endeavors in the final reality which guides all his thinking, his case is a sad one indeed.

The effect of this attitude is far-reaching. The tendency is to fail to see any significant difference between religions or theories of reality or the different manifestations of a Supreme Being behind all phenomena. Hear these words from Sri Ramakrishna, an educated holy man of India: "Different creeds are but different paths to reach the Almighty. Various and different are the ways that lead to the temple of Mother Kali at Kalighat. Similarly, various are the ways that lead

to the house of the Lord. Every religion is nothing but one of such paths that lead to God. . . . . It is one and the same Avatara that, having plunged into the ocean of life, rises up in one place and is known as Krishna, and diving down again rises in another place and is known as Christ." [10] Muddled thinking, this! To bring together "the temple of Mother Kali" and "the house of the Lord" as comparable is to tread near the borderland of the grotesque. And to assert that Krishna and Christ are in the same category is to leave behind any sense of historic fact and the reality of moral distinctions. Here we come to one of the most far-reaching weaknesses of the Hindu system, the want of emphasis on personality, divine and human, and the inability to maintain moral values as essential to reality. When personality and morality are not lifted up to a place of supreme value all life suffers, and there is no better evidence of this fact than Indian life itself. How could it be otherwise when the very gods are lacking in the highest moral qualities and ultimate reality is impersonal?

According to this theory, we are not dealing with real existences even when we are thinking of ourselves. Everything is unreal except Brahman. According to the Vedantist, the gods themselves, even Siva and Vishnu, are only make-believe gods—the projections of the mind of man which has not yet realized that Brahman and Brahman alone exists. They may be temporarily helpful for the poor deluded worshiper who feels the need of a god to whom he can go when he is in trouble; but for the philosopher who really knows the truth, they are a snare and a delusion. For him they have disappeared as realities, and so have we—and so has everything else. We live our daily lives in a world where illusion rules and where things are not as they seem. As Dr. Nicol Macnicol suggests, we find it difficult to conquer evil when it is not thought of as real, and to embrace righteousness when it, too, is of the fabric of dreams.[11] It is at this point that an unbridgeable chasm exists between the religion of the Bible and Hinduism. Life for us must be real, and the conflict against evil no sham. As William James insisted, we live in a moral universe where it has "the feel of a real fight," and that is a part of the glory

[10] Quoted as one of the watchwords in Ballou, ed., *The Bible of the World,* p. ix.
[11] *Is Christianity Unique?* p. 35.

of human life. There are real issues, and it makes a difference on which side we fight. It makes a world of difference what a man believes. If he is in vital contact with a God who can enter into personal relations with his children, and who is immensely concerned whether they are devoted to truth and purity and unselfish service to each other, he is more likely to become like the God he reveres than if personality is at a discount and moral values are not of supreme importance. The contrast between the two views is justly emphasized by Professor John Bennett, who says: "I can see no compromise between the Hebrew-Christian understanding of the worth of the historical process with its emphasis upon the righteousness of God as relevant to that process and the Hindu view that this process from an ultimate perspective lacks importance if not reality." [12]

Hinduism suffers most at the point of belief in final reality, in God. This is not to say that there have not been those who have had more satisfying beliefs. On the contrary, there has been a theistic thread woven into India's religious history. The sad thing is that these views have not prevailed. One of the most pronounced advocates of a more personal view was Ramanuja, who died early in the twelfth century of our era. He was not in agreement with Sankara, the great master of the Vedanta philosophy, but boldly proclaimed Brahman as a personal God and human beings as individual persons, each with a distinct life which had a value of its own. It need not detain us here to call attention to very real differences between his doctrines and those of Christianity. That he did see life differently and in a far more Christian way than Sankara is in itself remarkable—a revealing glimpse of the possibilities of the Indian heart and mind. The pathos of the work of Ramanuja lies in his failure. Indian thinkers have gone with Sankara and not with Ramanuja, despite his insights and penetrating discussions of the meaning of final reality and human life. What comes home to our minds with great force is that the experience of Ramanuja—and others—shows that India still needs what the Christian missionary has to give: a revelation of God—of ultimate reality, if you will—that comes, not as the culmination of human reason

[12] *Christian Realism*, p. 159.

and insight, but as the self-disclosure of God himself in a character who was actually present on our planet and lived such a life that in it we can see what God is like in terms which human beings can understand. Here is India's great need, and only Christ can meet it.[12a]

3. *Why Take the Gospel to Buddhists?*

Buddhism was born and reared in India but is not found there today. The lands which call themselves Buddhist are Ceylon, Burma, and Siam in the south; China, Korea, and Japan in the northeast; and Tibet and Mongolia lying north and west of China in the great desert plateau of inner Asia. These are the most important lands, but this faith is also found in French Indo-China and in several smaller native states in the mountains between Tibet and British India. It is almost impossible to determine the total number of Buddhists. This is glaringly evident when Hume's estimate of 137,000,000 is set beside Rhys David's of 500,000,000. The disparity is caused mainly by the method of reckoning used in counting the Buddhists in China. If all the Chinese should be included because they are said to be Buddhists, the figure of Rhys David would not be far astray; but very few men today would feel justified in doing that. There are others who claim that only the Buddhist monks and nuns should be counted, and that would bring the figure down very much lower and make Hume's estimate more credible.

Buddhism is not a unity. The divisions are so deep and wide that one might justifiably think of three or four separate religions instead of one. And yet there is a sense of oneness based on a common tradition and origin. Despite the variety, which at places reaches the point of contradiction, all Buddhists feel themselves bound together by at least three things: reverence for the life and character of Gautama the Buddha, a common ethical background growing out of the moral teaching of the founder, and the more or less pessimistic attitude toward human life as full of suffering and misery. Everything in Buddhism harks back to, and depends on, the original contribution of the Buddha himself. In this it is completely unlike Hinduism, which

[12a] The author regrets that *The Gospel and India's Heritage*, by A. J. Appasamy, reached him too late for use in writing this section.

had no founder. Gautama Buddha lived in north India from about 560 to 480 B.C. The most significant event in his life was his "enlightenment" (Buddha means "the Enlightened") under the famous Botree, which occurred when he was about thirty-five years of age. It was the culmination of many years of search after the secret of human life and the cause and cure of suffering, which he found everywhere. The insight or illumination which flooded over him at that time was twofold. He saw that the cause of human misery was desire, and that its cure must be the eradication of desire. Very simple, and yet very meager, we would say, as a gospel. Nevertheless, it lies at the basis of all Buddhistic practice and thought. By desire is meant the craving after, or the lust for, wealth and fame and pleasure and all else that binds one to human life and causes an anxious longing for what one does not have or fears to lose. It was interpreted as comprising many things which we think of as worthy as well as those which have an evil tendency: that is, it included desire for life, both here and hereafter, the desire for wife, children, and a home, for knowledge and learning—in fact, everything which tends to break up the unruffled calm of a life which is completely content and has no longings after what it does not now possess. It makes a pretty clean sweep of all human desires—good, bad, and indifferent. The whole outlook was very different from that of Jesus, who discriminated sharply between the things which harm and those which are wholesome. Buddha could never have said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."[13] His whole theory was life-denying. It was only an attenuated life, in which innocent and worthy desires were to be unnaturally eliminated, which was held out as the *summum bonum*. But this was the conclusion the Buddha had reached out of his own experience and his deep brooding over the life of suffering humanity, and it has influenced Buddhist thought ever since.

Whatever conclusions we reach about the teachings of Buddhism, we must always hold the Buddha himself in highest regard. He lived his long life completely unsullied, and his example of noble

[13] John 10:10 (A.V.).

and high-minded living must ever remain an inspiration for all who come to know of him. He was, of course, a child of his time, and he left one practice which has been followed through the centuries and has been a drag on his system. Wherever Buddhism has gone the monastery and the monk have not only been characteristic but essential to its very existence. This system was based, according to the records, primarily upon the thought that man could not attain the ideal life in company with woman. She was a hindrance to spiritual attainment, and man must be celibate in order to make any progress toward the goal. In the Buddhism of the north, where salvation by faith came so widely to prevail, a way was opened to laymen which was not known in the south; but even here celibacy became the rule, except in one sect in Japan in which the clergy marry and rear families as do the laymen. The tendency of the religion as a whole has been to depreciate marriage as being a lower state than that of celibacy and to keep women in an inferior place.

But to come back to the way of salvation of the Buddha, we have to note that what he taught has never been practiced by any save the monks in the monasteries—not by the millions of laymen composing the population in Buddhist countries. As he is said to have taught it, early Buddhism can scarcely be said to be a religion at all. It is really a system of psychological ethics—that is, a regimen or mode of living calculated to eliminate desire from the life of the monks, based on a very remarkable analysis of the human personality. The end desired was a state of utter calm, unruffled by longing and craving after what we think of ordinarily as making up human existence lived normally and innocently. And this was to be accomplished by discipline, the steps to be taken being carefully outlined to the last detail. They, the monks, were to do this together in a monastery under the leadership of an abbot. Now the noteworthy thing about the process was that it was all to be done with no reference to any higher power. The Buddha has been accused of being an atheist and an agnostic, but he was neither. He took the gods of his day in India for granted and never questioned their existence, but they were useless so far as his purpose was concerned. What resulted was a system without a sense of dependence on a higher power, without worship or prayer

or praise. Man was to reach his goal, if he arrived at it at all, by his own unaided effort. There was no gospel here for common humanity, and that lack has been demonstrated conclusively in the history of Buddhism.

In the first place, the Buddhist monk is a wistful figure, looking back to the halcyon days of the faith when men and women became lyrical in their joy that they had attained the calm which the Buddha had long ago promised; he has little hope of success in this present-day world. There is testimony that for a long period no monk has actually claimed attainment; it is only a yearning hope, not a sure expectation. It is no wonder, then, that in the southern lands, where the early form of Buddhism, spoken of as Hinayana, is adhered to, the common people find little to attract them. They enjoy the festivals and consider themselves Buddhists, but when they are in trouble they are likely to go to the spirits of their pre-Buddhist animism for what solace they can find. This form of Buddhism is not a complete religion and fails to satisfy. But while that is the case in the south, the most marvelous development of the faith is to be found in the countries to the north, where—strange to say—the doctrine and the practice of the Buddha are almost entirely repudiated. He had essayed the impossible. Man cannot be satisfied by a so-called religion in which the fundamental features of religion are wanting. He craves a God to worship, one in whom he can place his trust and to whom he can pray. This is one of the most important lessons of the history of religion, and it has never received more impressive confirmation than in the story of Buddhism.

What do we discover in these northern lands where the type of Buddhism called Mahayana is found? There has been a transformation of the early teaching so complete that Buddhism has become a full-fledged religion with "gods many and lords many" and all the paraphernalia of an elaborate worship. Great divine beings emerge which far surpass Gautama Buddha in majesty and power. He, in fact, sinks to a position of relative unimportance in a system which is called by his name, but which runs counter to almost all he taught and practiced. It is not necessary here to discuss all the various forms which the Mahayana has taken, interesting and significant as they are.

Only one or two typical sects may be presented so that the needs of Buddhism can be seen.

The largest Buddhist sect in Japan is the Shinshu or Jodo-Shin sect. "Jodo" means "Pure Land," and "Shin," "true"; that is, it is the True Pure Land sect, being thought of as superseding the earlier Jodo sect. In both sects the great God is Amida (Amitabha in India, Omitofu in China), the God of Boundless Light, who presides over the Pure Land, or western paradise, to which he will receive those who have faith in him. Note the surprising difference between this and the teaching of Gautama Buddha. But we must take a farther step before the significance of this new teaching can be seen in its full light. The founder of the earlier Jodo taught the doctrine of salvation by faith, but it was faith which was to be "ritually expressed" by the endless repetition of the formula *Namu Amida Butsu* ("Hail thou Amida Buddha"). Shinran, the founder of the Shinshu, one of the most remarkable figures in the religious history of Japan, was not satisfied with this feature of the older Jodo. He felt that the Jodo salvation which was declared to be a way of faith was not that in any full sense; it was a combination of faith *and* works. What was the necessary repetition of *Namu Amida Butsu* but dependence on doing something, the doing of "works," to secure salvation? Shinran would have none of it. He proclaimed the doctrine that salvation was the gift of Amida and that is could be secured only by faith and by faith alone. Nothing one can do avails to bring salvation; one receives it from Amida by faith in him.

Here we are face to face with a most interesting and significant problem, the first part of which is to account for its origin. It looks very much like Luther's doctrine of justification by faith, the *sola fide* of the Reformers; and so far as the subjective side is concerned, it most certainly is. Where did it come from? Most scholars are now inclined to believe that it came originally, not from Christianity, but from the bhakti doctrine in India, which antedated Christianity by several centuries. But even with the question of origin settled more or less satisfactorily, the main problem for the Christian missionary still remains. What is the missionary to say when he is confronted by a Shinshuist who declares: We possess all you have, a God of boundless

light and love who opens up a beautiful paradise which we can enter at the end of our earthly life, the assurance of which is ours as soon as we put our faith in Amida?

The answer which must be given takes us to the very center of our faith and enables us to see it in the clearest light. The answer we are sure to find becomes apparent when we ask the question: Who is Amida? Who is Jesus Christ? The one, to put it briefly, is a figment of the imagination; the other, a historical character who walked among men at a very definitely known time in human history and in a well known locality. Amida never existed as a being on our planet but is a construction of the human mind, projected into the celestial universe to fill an urgent need for a worthy object of worship. He did not make man, but man made him—magnificent, yet fabricated and therefore unable to inspire confidence even in his existence. What is forcibly brought home to us is the significance of Christianity as a historical religion, in contrast to one which has no sure footing in history. We are well-nigh helpless in dealing with this form of Buddhism unless we in the Christian mission have a firm grip on this fundamental truth. We know what God is like because it pleased him to disclose himself to men in a real human being who was "born of woman"; went about teaching and doing good; was "crucified, dead, and buried"; and was in the end gloriously raised from the dead—our divine Savior and Lord. This cannot be said of Amida; he was made to be what he was by the mind of man with no foundation in actual, historical fact. What is wrong is that men crave more definiteness and more assurance than can be given in the case of Amida that their God really exists, that he really loves them, and that there really is a Pure Land out there in the golden west.

Another unfortunate defect in the conception is at the point of ethical seriousness. In Christianity a man is saved *from* his sins, but in Amidaism a man may be saved *in* his sins. Again we come to a place where one regrets the necessity of pointing out a weakness, and only the purpose of this study makes it essential. We must in all fairness indicate how deeply the Amida worshiper needs Christ if he is to enter into a fully moralized salvation. To quote from Professor Arthur Lloyd, who takes his statement from an official catechism of

the Shin sect: "But when a man is very zealous for the propagation of his religion, and offers his whole life, lies, sharp practices, and all, to that end, the whole offering is acceptable and lies and sharp practices, seeing that they become aids to the propagation of the Faith, become parts of an acceptable offering, and are thus accepted." [14] In a recent (1932) popular Japanese play written by Kurata Hyakuzo, *The Priest and His Disciples,* the same attitude is found repeated a number of times over. We find such a statement as "I become beautiful through my sins." [15] Shinran is made to say, "There's some excuse for the worst of sins." [16] Clearly the outstanding need is for a revelation of the character of a God who hates sin and loves righteousness, and we have that in Christianity, while it is not essential to Buddhism even at its best.

Buddhism is strange in its contradictions. In Japan these differences can be studied in their most extreme form. Harking back through many centuries to China and eventually to North India, the Japanese sects represent the farthest development of tendencies which began to make their appearance about the time of Christ. In addition to those which have been developed in the Pure Land sects are others which have traveled in a widely different direction. One of these is found in the Zen sect, brought over from China but carried to a much fuller point of development in Japan. It shows no trace of Amidaism with its salvation by faith, but has moved in the opposite direction. This sect lays emphasis on complete emptiness of mind, without any thoughts emanating from external nature or other persons or even a divine being. All that is of value is to be found within oneself, in a kind of ineffable experience called *satori.* It is an experience which its advocates declare cannot be described. It comes to one in strange and even outlandish forms. The one thing that needs emphasis here is that it is a self-achieved salvation and has no relation to God or man or to nature around him. It is purely individualistic. In this respect it is like the experience of Gautauma Buddha and his early disciples, though it proceeds farther even than the founder in re-

[14] *Shinran and His Work,* pp. 120 f.
[15] P. 243.
[16] P. 198.

jecting anything that savors of metaphysical reality—gods or any other. So in making this cursory swing around the circle of Buddhism, we can only conclude that with all that is admirable in the life and character of the Buddha and all that is uplifting and fine in his moral teaching and in the splendid men we meet along the way, the people who call themselves Buddhists are seriously in need. Their need, moreover, cannot be met by anything in their religion no matter how it is interpreted or developed.

Very unfortunately, the ordinary Buddhist priest is not a worthy representative of his faith. He cannot be looked to for the kind of spiritual uplift or altruism which is sorely needed in Buddhist lands. Social service, pity, and helpfulness to those in need has not come within the circle of his interests. There are Buddhists who deplore this attitude and would bring in another day. Under the influence of the West, notably Christianity, they are beginning to bestir themselves and follow the example which has thus been presented. The missionary rejoices in this change. Yet he cannot help but realize that the religion of Buddhism fails in dynamic and in objective reality as compared with the religion of Christ, who as he went about doing good was at the same time a revelation of the very heart of God, and who is actually with his servants in their daily lives through the Holy Spirit.

4. *Why Take the Gospel to Confucianists and Taoists?*

The heading of this section might just as well have been: Why take the gospel to the Chinese? In general the Chinese are at the same time Confucianists, Taoists, and Buddhists, with no sense of incongruity. When he is in society, a Chinese is a Confucianist; when he is in difficulty and is baffled by fears, he is a Taoist; when he thinks of a supervening spiritual world and faces death, he is a Buddhist. It has been said that these religions answer to moods of the Chinese soul.[17] But underneath these religious systems there is a substratum of animistic beliefs which have not been thrown off by the advent of the formulated doctrines. It is a somewhat strange and yet significant fact that no people in the modern world have retained so much

[17] Clennell, *The Historical Development of Religion in China*, p. 13.

of their early crude attitudes towards life and the supernatural as have the Chinese. It is an evidence of a deeply rooted and all-pervasive conservatism, which has only recently been recognized as a dead weight on their national and social well-being. It is a difficult and fundamental problem for Chinese leaders as they face the future and work for progress. The early Taoist teaching has long been dead; even Confucianism is moribund; but the old animism, based on fear of evil spirits which are everywhere seeking to do injury, exerts its influence with almost unabated energy.

This animistic attitude continues through the decades as one of the chief missionary problems. The problem is one of general education as well as of direct religious instruction. The statement has been made that a physical geography is the most effective instrument to drive out many of the old superstitions. Boys and girls learn that the processes of nature are governed by observable, and to a certain extent controllable, natural forces and not by invisible, malicious, and capricious spirits working their will to the injury of men and society. The day is coming rapidly when the educational function will be taken over largely by the state, though in the past it has been almost exclusively the work of the missionary teacher. But when the state is in a position to do all that lies in its power, it cannot touch the basic task of healing the mind and ministering to the soul of China. The statement of this problem has not taken many words; the danger is that it may not be recognized as of the highest importance. The fear of evil spirits is abroad in the land. It has not been eliminated by the teachings of the formal systems and stands in need of the revelation of a God who is the Creator of all, whose providence extends over all his works, who marks the sparrow's fall and is solicitous for the life of every human being, and whose power is not curtailed by sprites and spirits that would wreak their vengeance on men at every turn.

Out of the animistic attitude came ancestor worship, the solidarity of the family, and filial piety, the very center of the Chinese social system. As Dr. De Groot suggests,[18] the last thing a Chinese will give up is his ancestor worship—it is the cement that holds the structure

[18] *The Religion of the Chinese*, chap. iii.

of Chinese life together. There is much of good in the system, and no matter how far behind China leaves her old life, there are features of the belief which should always be retained. But as a system in its totality ancestor worship not only is a bar to progress but is doomed. The rights of the father trample down those of the other members of the family. Woman is looked upon as a means to an end, that of giving birth to sons so that ancestor worship may be continued from generation to generation; she has little value in herself. The bondage of the conservatism which insists on the maintenance of the status quo is at no other point more strongly felt. At the present time, when under the impact of modern life and its outlook the old system has begun to disintegrate, the problem has to some extent changed form. Now the main cause of anxiety is the need of guidance and direction so that a worthy family life, based on mutual respect and equal rights and privileges for all its members, shall take the place of the old. Shall it be a family life based solidly on a religion which is capable of making the development of personality a reality; or shall it be left to a barren securalism which fails to root its teachings in the revelation of a God who is a Father concerned for the welfare of his children? This is one of the most evident forms in which the need in China is being felt today.

What resources are there in Chinese thought and religion to meet this need? Confucianism may be dying, as many Chinese themselves assert, but it is the most characteristic product of their genius. For the most part it is humanistic. Confucius was deeply interested in personal character, in the harmonious functioning of society, and in the correct ordering of the state; but he had little interest in the spiritual world and the future life. The success of Buddhism, coming as it did into an environment seemingly alien to its genius, is glowing testimony to a spiritual longing in the heart of the Chinese which Confucius neither appreciated nor satisfied. The new religion, coming in from the outside, opened up a spiritual world the reality of which the Chinese had never before suspected. It was, be it noted, a foreign religion which did what China needed—one which she had never been able to bring forth for herself.

More can be said, however, of China's own contribution. Embedded

in the background of the thinking of the Chinese are other conceptions which meant little to Confucius but which have lived on in spite of his almost exclusive occupation with relations on the human level. There was an old state worship which had its beginning far back before authentic history and which continued until the end of the Manchu dynasty in 1912. It was performed by the emperor alone, but he conducted the long and complicatetd ritual as a representative of all his people, as their Father as well as the Son of Heaven. He worshiped High Heaven under the name of Shang-ti (also called T'ien). So exalted is this conception that Shang-ti has been adopted by Protestant translators as the name of God in the Chinese Bible. Besides this another idea has been floating around in the back of the Chinese mind—the idea of Tao (pronounced "dow"). What is Tao? It is one of the most illusive words in the whole realm of the world's philosophical and religious thinking. Commonly translated as the "way"—the way or process of nature or the universe in its stately progress through the years and decades and centuries—it has also been conceived as nature itself or Providence, and also as Reality. The most comprehensive definition is that of Professor W. E. Soothill, of Oxford: "Tao, then, may be considered as the eternal and ubiquitous impersonal principle by which the universe has been produced and is supported and governed." [19] A wonderful conception, and yet inadequate, as the religious history of China abundantly testifies. Tao is not a god but a principle, impersonal and illusive. To a certain extent the same may be said of Shang-ti. That has always been the weakness of Chinese thought, strongly humanistic and weakly spiritual. They are present, Shang-ti and Tao, in the background of the Chinese mind, but they have never had a popular appeal and fail to provide religious motivation or spiritual uplift. At the same time that the thinkers and seers were dealing with these tenuous ideas, the people were under the bondage of fear—a fear, affecting all the people high and low, which has kept Chinese life on a far lower level than would be expected in view of the higher conceptions in the minds of the literati.

Taoism received its formulation at the hands of the somewhat leg-

[19] *The Three Religions of China* (2nd ed.), p. 16.

endary Laocius (Lao-tse), an older contemporary of Confucius. The two scholars could not understand each other. Laocius was a quietist whose great admonition was to order life in imitation of Tao, which, according to his teaching, never asserted itself, sought the lowest level, like water, and yet was accountable for the universe and its processes. Confucius was the exact opposite, an activist who was always bestirring himself and urging others to the same activity to develop the qualities inherent in human nature and thus produce an ideal condition in individual life, in society, and in the state. The Chinese have gone with Confucius and not with Laocius. The lofty idealism of Laocius was stranded many centuries ago and does not touch Chinese life intimately today. The system which is today called Taoism is the worst blot on the face of Chinese religion. It trades on the superstitious fears of the people, giving itself to every form of magical practice and sensational quackery to keep the poor people in its power. There is no hope here; the sooner the Chinese rid themselves of this charlatanry the better. And even in Confucianism, looked upon as a system of ethics, there is much to be desired. The good in this common-sense system fails at the point of moral challenge. Contrasted with the ethic of Jesus, it is on a lower plane. One might actually fulfill Confucius' demands; that cannot be said of Christ's. The Sermon on the Mount is a challenge to what man has never achieved, luring one on to more strenuous endeavor and filling the mind with wonder at the achievement of Jesus, who "spoke as never man spake," whose life and example go even beyond his precept and lead us to the God who is love and holiness itself.

5. *Why Take the Gospel to Shintoists?*

Shinto is the original religion of Japan. Purely as a religious cult it would scarcely be worthy of our attention. It started as a primitive animism, having its origins far back in prehistoric days, and still remains a simple, more or less undeveloped cult with no formulated teachings and no ethical code. It could not stand up against Buddhism with its elaborate worship, its sacred literature, and its monastic system; nor did it have anything to offer in the place of Confucian morality, which became the accepted code in Japan. So completely

did Buddhism sweep the land that Shinto well nigh disappeared as a separate system. There grew up what was known as Ryobu, or "Dual" Shinto, a mixture of Buddhism and Shinto, in which Buddhism more or less absorbed its backward rival and became the dominant religion. It was even declared that the old Shinto deities were in reality incarnations or other forms of the Buddhas and other divine beings which had come in across the water. But this is not the whole story, for Shinto did continue to have an independent existence and, especially during the past century and a half, has asserted its separateness and is organized in a dozen or more distinct sects today. Some of its offshoots have claimed the allegiance of many Japanese, but for the most part they rise rapidly and fall again into relative unimportance. But with all this it has not developed to the extent that it presents any special problem for the Christian world mission not found in other parts of the world.

Shinto, then, is a simple nature worship, but, this is not all; there is another side of the shield. As was said by Dr. George W. Knox many years ago, "Shinto is the marriage of the worship of nature to that of the worship of the Imperial house."[20] This is what has given Shinto its present importance and has made it so significant not only in the life of Japan but in all Japanese relations with other countries in the Far East—and, in fact, the whole world. This unique development is of such far-reaching importance that it must be understood.

On October 17, 1940, Japan celebrated the twenty-six hundredth anniversary of the founding of the empire. That is, according to the claim made by the Japanese, in the year 660 B.C. Jimmu Tenno established his rule and founded a dynasty, which has continued unbroken to the present time. The present Emperor, Hirohito, is said to be the hundred and twenty-fourth in direct succession. What gives this claim religious significance is that Jimmu Tenno is presented as the "grandson" of Amaterasu-o-mi-kami, the Sun Goddess, the chief deity in the Shinto pantheon. All Japanese are taught this as the fundamental affirmation of the national creed. It is accepted by all, or—to state it more

[20] *Development of Religion in Japan*, p. 66.

carefully—it is denied by none. It has become the touchstone of loyalty to the empire.

Not only so, but all the descendants of Jimmu, being in direct, unbroken line, are also descendants of Amaterasu and are worthy of divine worship. This claim is not merely a theory; it has become a matter of the greatest practical importance. When the great Emperor Mutsuhito (1868-1912) lay on his death-bed, men and women could be seen, sometimes in large numbers, in the great plaza outside the palace grounds in Tokyo on their knees in prayer. The anomalous situation was that they were not only praying for the recovery of the emperor, but praying to him! Nor is this all; the Japanese islands are said to have been produced by two primal divinities, the very ones responsible for the birth of the Sun Goddess herself. And finally, the Japanese people themselves are descendants of divine beings. So in the end we come to this amazing conclusion; a divine people, living on divine soil, ruled over by a divine emperor!

That is the claim; on what is it based? The one sure fact is that as far back as historical research can be carried the belief in an unbroken line of emperors can be verified. This takes us back into the fifth century of our era; during the period since then the imperial line has remained intact. This does not mean that every emperor was succeeded by his son but that there was close blood relationship between an emperor and the one who succeeded him. Nothing like it has been known in history elsewhere. It is the longest-lived dynasty known. But a question still is to be faced. What of the thousand years between the assumed foundation of the empire and the time when historical records can be verified? All we can say is that the extreme care which has been exercised to preserve an unbroken line in historical times would lead to the conclusion that it must have been equally a matter of solicitude before that time. But even then fact gives place to legend at some time long before Jimmu Tenno is reached.

On that rather unstable foundation what a superstructure has been constructed! In 1912 Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain, formerly of the Imperial University in Tokyo, published a pamphlet entitled

The Invention of a New Religion. In it he tells of what had taken place when as yet the seriousness of the situation as disclosed in more recent years had not become apparent. Taking what was true in history and what was accepted from myth and legend, Japanese officialdom reconstructed an already existing emperor worship in order to offset the influence of Western countries which was flooding the country in the decade between 1880 and 1890. These patriots adopted the tradition but blinked the unpleasant facts: they would have it that "from the time that Our Imperial Ancestor first ruled the land, there has been great concord in the Empire, and there has never been any factiousness."[21] This was written in the seventh century; it might as well have been written in the nineteenth. Murdock says concerning the claim just quoted: "This assertion is notoriously at variance with records, which are full of accounts of factiousness, rebellions, and internal broils and brawls and battles."[22] This is confirmed by Chamberlin in his pamphlet: "The sober fact is that no nation probably has ever treated its sovereigns more cavalierly than the Japanese have done, from the beginning of authentic history down to within the memory of living men. Emperors have been deposed, emperors have been assassinated; for centuries every succession to the throne was the signal for intrigues and sanguinary broils. Emperors have been exiled; some have been murdered in exile."[23] And yet it has come about that the people under the leadership and dictates of the official class turn to Mikadoism as the center around which the life of the nation should revolve; they make it virtually a religion, demanding the supreme allegiance of the Japanese people.

This has not been so difficult in Japan as it would have been in lands with a democratic tradition. In his *Ancestor-Worship and Japanese Law,* Mr. N. Hozumi, of the Imperial University of Tokyo, speaks of "the unity of worship and government" as an idea coming down out of antiquity.[24] A very significant statement from Professor Genchi Kato, "Associate Professor of the Tokyo Imperial

[21] Murdock, *A History of Japan,* I, 55.
[22] *Ibid.,* p. 55, note.
[23] P. 12, and more along the same line.
[24] P. 74.

University in charge of the Chair of Shinto," may be given: "Shinto .... has culminated in Mikadoism or the Worship of the Mikado or the Japanese Emperor, as a divinity, during his lifetime as well as after his death..... Herein lies even in the present day, in my opinion, the essence of life of Shinto, inseparably connected with the national ideals of the Japanese people. .... It is the lofty self-denying enthusiastic sentiment of the Japanese people towards their august Ruler, believed to be of something divine." [25]

Later in this volume, in the chapter on nationalism and its relation to the world mission, we shall be dealing with totalitarianism in Japan as well as in other countries, so it is not necessary to deal with it here. The question standing at the head of this section asks why we should take the gospel to Shintoists, and enough has been presented to make possible a very definite answer. We take the gospel of Jesus Christ to Japan because it is universal, and the State Shinto of Japan is local and national. It is intended for one people alone and cannot be the religion of other peoples, unless they are forcibly amalgamated with the Japanese and are made to adopt their religious ideas and practices. Even if this should be accomplished, Shinto is still Japanese to the core and is not really intended for anyone else. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion reached by Hendrik Kraemer that Shinto "is the expression of *the belief of the Japanese people in itself,*" [26] "the self-deification of the Japanese nation." [27] Such a religion is self-condemned. It may continue under the conditions which obtain today, when extreme and exclusive nationalism and racialism are abroad in the world, but it cannot last. With all that has happened to disrupt the life of the world, the peoples and nations still form a world community, now at war but someday to be at peace, bound together by common interests and by mutual appreciation and the spirit of helpfulness. Under such conditions this brand of nationalism will automatically be outmoded, and the peoples of the world will be satisfied only with a religion that is universal. Only such a religion possesses binding power capable of holding the various nations together in

[25] *A Study of Shinto, the Religion of the Japanese Nation,* p. 206.
[26] Quoted in *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,* p. 193.
[27] *Ibid.,* p. 195.

their deepest thinking and in their highest aspirations. Here is the opportunity for Christianity, a religion which is universal in its very structure and cannot be anything else. The one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Father of all, of the Japanese and of the other peoples as well. Servants of such a God cannot but seek to win all men to a fellowship of devotion and love which will include all irrespective of the barriers of nationalism and race.

It should be apparent that State Shinto is a real religion. The issue is clouded, however, by the ambiguous situation in which Christians and others in Japan find themselves. The Japanese government has made repeated declarations that the visits which Japanese are required to make to the Shinto shrines are patriotic and not religious. When a Buddhist or a Christian goes to a shrine and bows reverently he is showing his loyalty to the throne and not worshiping divine beings. Yet this act of reverence is carried on at Shinto shrines, where worship of Shinto divinities is regularly performed, so that at best it is exceedingly difficult to disassociate it from worship. When, further, the act is interpreted as doing honor to the spirits of the ancestors of the imperial line, the chief of whom is Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, it is hard to escape the conclusion that in order to avoid embarrassment the government is pursuing a policy of conciliation, but that sooner or later the real character of the act will be revealed as genuine worship. Should that day come, the issue will be joined—nationalism versus universalism, Mikadoism versus Christianity—with results which might easily involved persecution and even martyrdom.[28]

Such was the situation until Japan declared war on December 7, 1941. What has taken place since that momentous occasion we have no means of knowing.

6. *Why Take the Gospel to Moslems?*

The followers of Mohammed are found all the way from the Pacific Ocean in China and the East Indies to the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Africa. They form a part of the population in southern Russia and in the Balkans, and far south in Africa with

[28] For a careful study of this whole problem see Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan.*

mosques even in Cape Town. The center and heart of the religion is Arabia, with Mecca as the sacred city, to which all faithful Moslems go on pilgrimage if at all possible once in their lifetime. The number of Moslems is difficult to determine. It has been estimated all the way from 225,000,000 to 275,000,000. One of the latest estimates is that of Professor P. K. Hitti, who places it at 246,000,000.[29] The largest single group is in India, where they number 70,000,000 or more, but here even with so large a population they are a minority group. Thus we have the interesting and significant phenomenon of a great multitude of people, widely scattered and divided by race, language, and nationality, and yet forming a homogenous religious group with a keen sense of unity and solidarity and intensely loyal to Mohammed and the creed which he proclaimed.

The clash between Islam and Christianity is very severe, and the relations between the two have never been pleasant. Moslems claim that because it is the latest of the great world religions—the official date of the beginning of the Mohammedan era is A.D. 622, the year when Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina—it supercedes all the others, especially Judaism and Christianity with which its origins are closely associated. No other great religion is so intolerant and so filled with resentment at the thought of missionary endeavor to win its adherents to another faith, especially Christian, as Islam. No other religion has so successfully offered opposition to an approach by Christianity and prevented its people from giving an open-minded hearing to its claims. That Moslems can be won to Christ is amply shown, particularly in India and the East Indies, but in general the results have been exceedingly meager. On the other hand, the advance of Islam as an aggressive religious force, winning converts and solidifying its position in many new sections, is a noteworthy fact in religious history. Today these two religions, Christianity and Islam, are the aggressive missionary forces in the world. The future for many savage tribes depends on whether they become Christian or Moslem. So, it is a matter of the highest importance that Christian people realize what Islam stands for and the reasons why the religion of Christ should

[29] *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

be taken to the followers of the Desert Prophet, who on their part firmly believe that their creed is the final revelation of God and is destined to be the religion of all mankind.

When the Islamic system is studied it appears so vulnerable that it would seem a relatively easy task to convince men of the inadequacy of their position. There is so much more to be said for some of the other religions that it is surprising how difficult it is to deal with Moslems concerning their doctrines and practices. They are not only ever ready to defend their religion but are aggressively active in attacking Christianity and displaying its weaknesses as they see them. The "Mohammedan controversy" is well known wherever the adherents of the two faiths meet. Most of it has turned into sterile disputation, and missionaries are now avoiding it as far as possible. Nothing can please an ardent Moslem more than to sit for long hours endlessly arguing point after point, with neither disputant convinced by the other. And yet it is necessary for any who would face the Moslem missionary problem to understand the meaning of some of these very points and penetrate into the meaning of the religion which continues to defy the Christian and his gospel.

The Moslem creed may be learned in a minute and never forgotten. "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah." Gibbon's famous comment was that this creed embodies "an eternal truth and a necessary fiction," and both are necessary to Islam. Mohammed is as essential as Allah if Islam is to exist, yet the founder does not hold a position in his religion like that of Christ in his. Moslems would prefer not to be called "Mohammedans" for fear that it might be thought that Mohammed's relation to his religion was the same as that of Jesus to Christianity. He is not a Saviour nor a Mediator, the idea of mediatorship being specially repugnant. Mohammed is the Prophet or, more correctly, the Messenger of Allah, and no more. He was the absolute ruler of his people while he lived, and he has been followed by caliphs or "successors," but he was never considered divine and in his own estimation was a sinner needing forgiveness. But strange to say, this fallible human being who made no claim to be more than man has been followed and imitated as if he were

the paragon of excellence. One of the leading authorities makes this statement: "Serious or trivial, his daily behavior has instituted a canon which millions observe at this day with conscious mimicry. No one regarded by any section of the human race as Perfect Man has been imitated so minutely." [30]

It is not the function of this presentation to discuss the life and character of Mohammed, but we cannot escape some reference to his career. One of the chief reasons for taking Jesus Christ to the Moslem is the sad and unfortunate influence which the Prophet has exercised over his followers. He started out well. There are those who feel that in the early days of his mission he was in the true line of succession of the Old Testament prophets. But as the years passed the lust for power and sensuality took possession of him more and more so that he lost his moral grip. Professor D. B. Macdonald is forced to speak of "the last terrible ten years." [31] He was a true prophet who went wrong. This is a sore point for the Islamic apologists today. In the past it was not a problem for the Islamic community at all; there was nothing strange for them in actions which to us are altogether unbecoming in one who claims to be the mouthpiece of God. But in recent years, when Islam has been compelled to come out into the light of modern thought and life, especially in Turkey, Egypt, and India, it has suffered embarrassment when confronted by criticisms of the life and character of the Prophet. Every effort has been made to place him in a favorable light and to defend his questionable acts on the basis of military necessity or political expediency. This is done by Ameer Ali, Syed, with an almost defiant claim to Mohammed's superiority to all other religious leaders.[32] It is very interesting and revealing that in his remarkable volume, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* Sir Mohammad Iqbal does not discuss the Prophet—his name does not even occur in the index. But so long as the Koran exists, and so long as the traditions of the life and sayings of the Prophet continue to be accepted as authoritative, Islam cannot hope to justify the Prophet in the moral judgment of the world.

[30] D. G. Hogarth, *Arabia,* p. 52, as quoted in Hitti, *op. cit.,* p. 120.
[31] *Aspects of Islam,* p. 74.
[32] *The Spirit of Islam,* p. 117.

The Buddha stands out as a mountain peak of uprightness, and as for Jesus—the Crystal Christ in whom no flaw can be found—we as Christians must continue to hold him up as the perfect example for men and also as their Savior and Lord.

The Koran, the sacred book of Islam, is read more faithfully than any other book in the world. This must be said to the shame of Christians, who have the Bible and especially the New Testament in their hands, but who are not, as a whole, devoted to it as Moslems are to their sacred book. To us this devotion is difficult to understand, for most of the Koran is not even interesting reading; and yet to every Moslem it is the acme of perfection, whether he can read it himself or must hear it read and memorize it. According to accepted Islamic doctrine, the Koran is the uncreated word of God which has existed eternally at the right hand of God on high and was brought to Mohammed piecemeal by Gabriel as need arose. This is a tremendous claim, made for no other sacred book in any other religion, the Christian Scriptures included. Yet when it is read the unequal value of its various parts is striking. There are passages which breathe a high inspiration, but there are also dreary pages where the details of administration take the place of vital contact with God and his relations with men. There are also unfortunate passages where the personal relations of the Prophet with the members of his harem become the subject of sayings which reveal the mind of one living on a plane unworthy of one who would bring his people to God. When the "awful machinery of divine inspiration," as Professor Macdonald calls it, "is used to cover his own sensuality and to compose petty difficulties in his harem the sincerity of Mohammed is severely strained and the Koran becomes a very human document." [33]

Many approaches to the teaching of Islam are open, but none is more significant than that through the doctrine of Allah, or God. It fills nine-tenths of the space in Mohammedan theological works. We must confine our attention to features relevant to our purpose. What kind of being is Allah? Of all the "ninety and nine most beautiful names of God" the name of Father does not appear. It did not just

[33] Quoted from the author's *The Religions of Mankind* (rev. ed.), p. 298.

happen so. The term "father" conveys to a Moslem the idea of physical procreation, and that is thought of as entirely unworthy of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. The objection, however, goes farther than that. If God is a Father then we are his sons, and that would give men a relationship to God which Islam cannot allow. God is so completely transcendent that human beings cannot be thought of as worthy to partake of the divine nature. It is abhorrent for a Moslem to think that God could say, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," or that he actually "created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."[34] It is striking that modern Barthianism should have the same kind of hesitation in allowing for a likeness of nature in God and man. To deny this fundamental doctrine is Islamic; it is surely not Christian.

This so-called doctrine of "difference" lies close to the center of Islamic thought. So different are God and man that human analogy fails to function in attempting to describe what Allah is like. He is said to be merciful, but the quality of mercy as between man and man gives no hint of the meaning of mercy as a divine attribute. Were the Moslem consistent he could know nothing of his God at all except possibly that he exists, and silence would be the appropriate attitude in dealing with the transcendent and ineffable Being on high. But the Moslem fortunately is not consistent; he must think thoughts about God and does so on the basis of analogy, whether it is consistent with his theory or not. And where does this lead him? He makes much of his status before Allah and of his future, where either a yawning hell of fire or a paradise of bliss await mankind. They may escape one and win the other by acceptance of the message of Mohammed, submission to Allah (Islam means "submission"), and obedience to the revealed will of God as found in the Koran and the Traditions. In the end all Moslems will be saved and enter paradise, no matter how they have acted here in this world—provided, of course, they have not denied Allah and his Prophet. Their condition in bliss is also determined by the doctrine of difference with which we are dealing. Even in paradise they do not partake of the divine nature or enjoy fellowship with

[34] Gen. 1:26-27.

God. Man is created carnal, and carnal he will remain while on earth or in heaven. He obeys God and receives his reward: the physical bliss of running streams, cool shade, and perfectly formed damsels. There is no change in his nature; he remains as he has always been, a creature fitted to enjoy physical pleasure and rise no higher in the realm of taste and moral and spiritual idealism.

What has just been outlined is the Islam of the masses; it is likewise the Islam of the Koran and the Traditions; it is also doctrinally correct. But it has not satisfied all Moslems. Choice souls have appeared who have had their eyes turned to more elevating conceptions. The greatest character in the history of Islamic thought is al-Ghazzali, the great constructive theologian and mystic who died in the year 1111. He felt he knew God and had contact with him. No better man has been produced in Islam than this, one who was sure that he knew God and who tried to find a place for such an experience in his theology. Without doubt as the years pass there will be others who, like al-Ghazzali, will find God in their own way and cling to their discovery whether it fits in with the system or not. The difficulty is that they are likely to accomplish very little, for what they stand for runs counter to the dead weight of the system which tends to bear them down to the level of uniformity.

There are others who, like Sir Mohammad Iqbal and professors and promoters of the Islamic University at Aligarh in North India, are seeking to reinterpret Islam and bring it into line with modern thought. What happens is well illustrated in Sir Mohammad's own volume. He is like certain extreme critics in Christianity who, in the attempt to explain certain doctrines and biblical incidents, explain them away. The kind of explanation which makes Islam palatable to Sir Mohammad Iqbal would not be accepted by other reformers who are as intent as he on resuscitating the religion, infusing it with new life, and sending it out again a conquering faith with a real message for the world. They do not believe in a reinterpretation which very frequently shades off into arid rationalism, which they say would not be true to Islam at all. The tendency among these men who want to accommodate their religion to the modern world is to move toward sheer irreligion, which we of the West know all too well. The

real reformers to which reference has been made are represented by the Wahabi movement in central Arabia. It sprang up over a century ago as a protest against innovations which these leaders felt would deface original orthodox Islam. It has had a varied history but has become strong again since the First World War and stands at the present time for the religion as Mohammed taught it. It is very much alive and full of enthusiasm. What it can accomplish remains to be seen, but it is already clear that it finds a response in the minds of many Moslems because it is a return to the simplicities of the faith when that faith was a vigorous propagating force in the world.

We have wandered somewhat afield but must return and touch upon another quality of the Moslem Allah. A further statement must be made if we are to penetrate into the being of God and reveal what he is like within. Of all the qualities attributed to Allah the most important is power. He is almighty—almighty without any limitations. In Christianity we pray to "the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," and yet when we are questioned we are quite ready to admit that the power of God is limited. His will is limited by his nature. Our God cannot do an unjust or an unloving thing, for far down under everything else, in the very structure of his being, God is just and God is love. This is fundamental to our whole idea of the Supreme Being. The will of God is not primary in Christianity, for God acts in accord with what is deeper and more determinative, his essential nature. Now when this statement is made to the Moslem, who claims that our God is inferior to his because he is a limited God, it is not convincing. He answers that even if this limitation is one not imposed from without but springs from the inner being of God himself, it still remains a limitation. He will have nothing to do with a limitation of any kind, whether it is outer or inner—he is limited and that is all there is to it; he must therefore be an inferior being.

Let us see where we have arrived. What the Mohammedan has really done has been to enthrone arbitrary will at the center of the universe and call it God. To put it in another form, he has pictured a capricious, arbitrary Eastern potentate with unlimited authority, unrestrained by anything more fundamental than his own immediate desire, projected that being into the heavens, put him on the heavenly

throne, and called him God. Allah is not only almighty but the source of all power, so that all the acts which are performed in the world, by men and women and in animate nature, are not their own acts but his. He is the sole actor in the universe; we only seem to act, accepting his acting in us as if it were our own, but doing it unconsciously so that what we do seems to be our acts when they are really his. This reduces man to a kind of blind, automatic life which he does not really control, with the result that the pall of fatalism hangs dark over the Moslem world. A man shrugs his shoulders over whatever occurs or whatever he does and mutters, "Kismet." What can he do about it—all is fixed, all is decreed, all is in the hands of an omnipotent Power, who is ultimately responsible for all. It does away with the operation of secondary causes in nature and makes natural law unnecessary. How could there be any such law when all that happens is the immediate effect of the will of Allah? But even more serious, it does away with an adequate ethic. Goodness in Islam is not conformity to the nature of Allah but obedience to the commands which Allah has issued. These are as they are because Allah so willed and revealed them to men, but they might have been different if Allah had seen fit. They do not represent what the unchanging God is like, nor spring from his undeviating and essential righteousness. Goodness in Christianity is conformity to the nature of God, which is always the same. What God commands is not arbitrary because it is in conformity with the unchanging structure of God's very being. Islamic ethics, then, is based on an unstable foundation, and the fruits in morality leave much to be desired. The life of a Moslem is one of outward obedience, not inward conformity. It is a legalism based on a code, not the transformation of the inner life, the motives, and the standards of conduct, founded on a fellowship with God which becomes more real as the years pass and which makes a man over in the image of the God he worships and loves.

There is little wonder that Moslems looks askance at the approach of the Christian messenger. Their history is one of antagonism. Almost immediately after the founding of Islam their armies attacked and conquered many of the finest lands in which Christianity had been entrenched for centuries. The onslaught was often cruel and ruth-

less and could only leave memories of base perfidy as a feature of a religion which would allow such practices and forcibly turn men and women to another faith. But when the time came, Christianity retaliated in kind. The Crusades embody in the mind of the Islamic world the meaning of Christianity. It was the attempt to recover the holy places of Christianity by force from Moslems who thought of Palestine, which they had conquered, as their home and who resented the intrusion of aliens. It left deep scars and memories which have not been obliterated. Only a few in the Middle Ages realized that the Moslems should be made the object of loving, saving endeavors; but these made little impression. The most famous was the Spaniard Raymond Lull, who prepared himself most carefully to undertake a mission to Moslems, and who paid the price of his life in Bugia, in North Africa, in 1315 or 1316, being stoned to death by an angry mob which resented his mission. There was also Francis of Assisi, who is usually not thought of as a missionary, but who went on three missions to Moslems but with no success.

Only during the last century and a half has the Christian Church taken the Moslem with any seriousness as an object of missionary concern. It is high time it should be done. Here are men and women who need the gospel of Christ as much as others; here is a culture sadly in need of renovation and with no prospect of revival except in response to a new gospel, one that will do for them what their own religion cannot do. It must be done, not by force or by argumentation, but by showing what God is like in the face of Jesus Christ, backed up by lives which exemplify his influence in daily conduct. As Samuel M. Zwemer, the well-known missionary to the Moslems, has often said, "We can out-think them, we can out-live them, we can out-die them." Christianity must win its way by clearer thinking, holier living, and more hopeful dying. There is no other way.

7. *Why Take the Gospel to Jews?*

The Jew is found everywhere; he has no country which he can call his own. There are more Jews in the world today than at any time in their history. The total number now is about sixteen million, of

whom five million are in the United States. The largest single group is in east central Europe, in Russia and Poland.

The Jews have had a sad history. They have been persecuted in one country after another during hundreds of years, and unfortunately the situation today promises little improvement. Anti-Semitism with its bloody pogroms in Russia, which stained the record of the Czarist regime for decades, is still a vivid memory. And today the attitude of Adolf Hitler and his party in Germany, standing for pure "Aryanism" and the elimination of everyone with even traces of Semitic blood, has resulted in a condition of unbelievable horror. The most serious aspect of the entire situation from the standpoint of a Christian is that so much of the persecution has been inflicted by so-called Christian nations and their rulers. In so far as a people or a ruler has persecuted the Jews, proof to the point of complete demonstration has been provided that they are not true to Christ. This accusation cuts deeply across the profession of many who are responsible for these persecutions and who have claimed the name of Christ. There is little danger that any onlooker, Jew or Gentile, will be tempted to think of the attitude of National Socialism in Germany as having a Christian origin. With Martin Niemöller and many of those like-minded now in concentration camps, suffering because of their Christian convictions, it is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion that it is Christianity as well as Semitism which is the object of hatred. The reasons for the opposition are, of course, different; but both are suffering together and experiencing the natural reaction of a system which cannot tolerate freedom of thought and action any more than racial aliens.

For most of his history since the time of Christ the Jew has lived apart from his fellowmen, segregated in ghettos and having relations with Gentiles at only a few points of contact. Since the time of the French Revolution, however, and under the inspiring leadership of Moses Mendelssohn, he has come out of his seclusion and taken his part in the life of the world. This has been true particularly in western Europe and America. Not only in business, in which he had long been known, particularly as a money lender, but in the world of education and the learned professions, notably in law and medicine,

he has not only taken his place but in many instances has been conspicuously successful. He is now a part of our life and moves freely in and out among us, being recognized as a member of the political, commercial, professional, and educational life of hundreds of communities in Great Britain, the United States, and elsewhere.

Jewish religion is Semitic and has the same background as the religion of the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians, Aramaeans, Phoenicians, and the Canaanites who inhabited Palestine when the Hebrew nomads emerged from the southern desert, invaded the country, and gradually established themselves as the people of the land, the children of Israel of the Old Testament. Judaism claims to have given birth to two daughter religions, Christianity and Islam, each of which has marred the heritage received from the mother faith. The legacy which they both received from Judaism was the ethical monotheism of the prophets. Islam has remained true to monotheism and has always contended fiercely for the doctrine of one God and one God alone, believing that the worst of sins a man can commit is to "add partners to God," as they put it, thus expressing their detestation of any form of polytheism or of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. What the Jew disavows in Mohammedanism is that it plays fast and loose with morality. With an unlimited, capricious Allah, whose arbitrary will decrees what is right and what is wrong, the whole system might be changed, turning what is right into its opposite by divine fiat. No sound ethical system could be built on such a foundation. That could only be done on the foundation of the unchangeable nature of an eternally righteous God.

But Judaism has its quarrel with Christianity, too. It is only too glad to admit that this daughter faith has preserved its ethical integrity; but Judaism is almost as vocal as Islam in its charge that Christianity has tampered with the doctrine of God, that it has not retained the heritage of monotheism in its pure form as presented in the Old Testament. With all that Christian theologians have consistently asserted from the earliest days until the present, that in Christianity there is but one God, its Jewish opponents have declared that the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ and of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Godhead vitiates the Christian position and really pre-

sents three Gods instead of one. Let it be said that the way in which the Trinity is often crudely presented by unknowing Christians does lend itself to this interpretation. Notwithstanding that, there never has been the slightest wavering in the Christian ranks in the belief that there is but one God, no matter how reverently and deeply the other conviction has been held, that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh.

The bitter antagonisms of the centuries are now being softened to a considerable extent by more intimate contacts and deeper mutual understanding between Jews and Christians. This is as it should be. In fact, only a beginning has been made in the kind of fellowship which makes such a relation possible. The Jew has come to realize that much that has gone by the name Christian is repudiated by many Christians with heartfelt disapproval. This has made possible an appreciation of Jesus Christ which was unknown in days gone by. The studies and writings of Klausner, Montefiore, Asch, and others, each making his investigation from a special viewpoint, have placed the Christian scholar in their debt. Jesus stands out as the greatest Jew, the last in the line of the Old Testament prophets, one of whom the Jewish people have good reason to be proud and to whom they may well listen as a revealer of God's will. This is not the complete Christian position, but it is traveling a long distance in the direction of mutual understanding and appreciation.

On the other hand, the Christian is learning much of the Jew concerning his religion. Not only do Jews believe in God, the God of the Old Testament, but they look on him as the God of love as well as of justice. He is a Father, cherishing his own and yearning that all nations might return to him and recognize in him their one God and Savior. More intimate knowledge of the religious life of the Jewish people is revealing depths of religious devotion and insight and of religious experience which have been hidden from the eyes of Christians. Thus does sympathetic contact drive away the mists and make known what was always present but could only be discovered by the eye eager to appreciate the best. When this result has been achieved the sheer weight of our common heritage is very impressive. Let us quote the measured words of Canon A. Lukyn Williams, who has

devoted much of his long life to the study of Judaism: "I myself have been impressed with the overwhelming importance of the points of *agreement* between modern Judaism and Christianity." He cites in particular two doctrines which stand out; they are that "God is One and God is Holy." He proceeds: "The doctrines of monotheism and of God's holiness are a combination peculiar to Jews and Christians and must procure for them the ultimate and never-ending opposition of all other religious bodies. Heathenism of every kind, ancient and modern, formally denies monotheism, and must eventually join with Mohammedanism in denying God's holiness and the call to follow it." [35]

Much credit must be given in the United States to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, which under competent leadership, by persistent watchfulness, and by its frequent round tables is dispelling misunderstandings between the two and making possible a wholesome interchange of views and attitudes. This deals with all kinds of issues, social and economic as well as religious. Many sharp and unkind jibes are being made impossible, and mutual respect is being introduced for the first time where inexcusable ignorance had long been the ground in which the bitter seeds of anti-Jewish feeling had grown and borne fruit. This movement is filling a felt need and should be furthered by every Jew, Roman Catholic, and Protestant who desires peace and harmony among those who have so much in common.

The question then cannot but be asked: Why take the Christian gospel to the Jews? Here we face real difficulty, which cannot be avoided and which must be discussed frankly and in good spirit. The Jew does not welcome the proposal that he become a Christian. This is stating the situation very mildly. Often the most violent opposition is encountered when this approach is made. And yet despite the deeply imbedded conviction that the Jew must remain a Jew, the Christian mission to Jews has been one of the most successful pieces of mission work in the past century and a half. Missions to Jews are to be found in many cities in Europe and America, and there is a constant though small stream of Jewish converts coming into the

[35] *The Doctrines of Modern Judaism Considered*, p. 145.

Christian Church. Unfortunately, much of this work has been done by those under the dominance of a "scheme of the ages" according to which the conversion of the Jews must precede the second coming of Christ and the millennial age which will follow. This dogmatic, rigid interpretation of the Bible has become impossible to many who, on an entirely different basis, believe in carrying the gospel to the Jewish people. The Jew is a fellow human being needing what Christ has to offer just as we Gentiles need it. Paul was a Jew, ardently attached to his people, who found it difficult to understand their refusal to accept Jesus as their Messiah. He could say, "I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh." [36] Would that we might have the same sorrow when we see men without Christ—it is that which we should appropriate from Paul's eagerness and not an eschatological scheme, which is said to be Pauline and which ties up a plan of the ages with the conversion of the Jew. What Paul realized fundamentally was that all men were alike in that they all were equally in need of Christ.

How are we to understand the strenuous opposition of the Jew to the Christian approach? It is difficult to differentiate between what is religious conviction and what is racial pride. There is a subtle blend of racialism and religion which are so mingled that the strands cannot be completely separated. The Jewish people are divided among themselves. The vast majority remain in the ranks of Orthodoxy. They would have Judaism remain just as it has always been with as little change as is consistent with life in a more or less alien environment. On the other side are the people of the Reform group, found in western Europe and in America, who frankly face the situation created by the contact of the Jew with modern life and thought. They make all necessary accommodations and work on the theory that ceremonies, no matter how ancient and hallowed, must prove their usefulness under modern conditions and must be discarded unless they have a helpful function to perform. The difference between the two groups is really a very serious one and can scarcely be healed. But with all these lines

[36] Rom. 9:2-3.

of cleavage the two schools, and those who hold positions between the two extremes, are all completely united at a number of fundamental points. They are all equally confirmed monotheists; all hold to the Old Testament Scriptures as their sacred book; and all look upon themselves as the chosen people with the most sacred obligation to maintain their racial and religious integrity and isolation. The question arises whether, when one of their number becomes a Christian convert, the chief concern is that he is lost to Judaism as a religion or to Judaism as a race. For the fact is that a convert to Christianity merges in the Christian group socially as well as religiously, is quite likely to marry a Gentile, and is completely lost to Judaism. It is a serious matter, then, to invite a Jew to become a Christian, for it means social ostracism as well as religious separation. We must have well considered reasons for asking the Jew to take so drastic a step.

The only reason must be that which is given in every case where the offer of Christ is made to one who is not a Christian. He needs what Jesus Christ can do for him, a blessing which he can secure in no other way. We thus find ourselves driven back on our spiritual resources. Does Christ make any difference? If he does not, there is no point in offering him to anyone; but if he does, there is as much reason to offer him to a Jew as to anyone else. Mutual understanding and sympathetic insight into each other's problems are necessary, but they are not enough. We who have Christ in our lives have been entrusted with a very precious treasure, which we are bound to share with others if we are to retain it ourselves. We Christians are no better than Jews; we have no right to hold ourselves aloof as superior beings. We are sinners, saved by grace; and in gratitude for the gift which has come to us we cannot but hope and work that all others, Jews as well as Gentiles, shall share in its blessedness. A very pertinent statement is made by Dr. William Paton in his recent book, *The Church and the New Order*. He says: "Christian evangelization of Jews, properly understood, is not, as it is often thought to be, a necessary barrier to friendship between Christians and Jews, but is the most effective answer to anti-semitism, inasmuch as it rests upon a refusal

to treat Jews as a special semi-human class to whom the Gospel may not be preached." [37]

There is a special reason why we should offer Jesus Christ to Jews. It cannot be put better than it was by Paul, who, speaking of his fellow Israelites, exclaims: "Whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." [38] Out of sheer gratitude to the race through whom we have received so much, we the recipients of that grace cannot but feel thankful and seek to return what has come to us as a gift which we in no sense merit or deserve. The same grief should fill our hearts which caused Paul such deep concern, that the race chosen of God to be a blessing to all the world should have missed its golden opportunity and ever since failed to fulfill the purpose which had been born in the counsels of God himself. Its place has been taken, not by another race, but by the Israel of God, those out of every tribe and kindred who have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and have become his messengers to the ends of the earth. Essentially there are no favored people before God; "for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." [39]

When Dr. Conrad Hoffman was asked what it was that Christianity conferred upon the Jew that he did not have before and of which he stood in so great a need, his answer was, "The new birth." Our minds flash back to the memorable scene when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and Jesus told him of the birth from above, the spiritual birth by which he might enter the Kingdom of God. The Jew has not changed since then, nor has God, nor human nature. He still needs the gift from above beyond all that the Old Testament revelation has conferred upon him, the free gift of God in Jesus Christ. He needs it, not to fit into an apocalyptic scheme, but simply because he,

[37] P. 160.

[38] Rom. 9:4-5.

[39] Rom. 10:12-13.

like all of us, is a sinner in need of forgiveness, a wanderer lost until he finds his way home, a child needing the care of a Father in his Father's house. There can be no closing of the chasm which still yawns between Jew and Christian until together we turn toward God, who offers us his all in Jesus Christ, our common Savior and Lord.

Chapter XIV

THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRISTIANITY

Does christianity meet the needs of men in a way other religions do not and cannot? Or, to put the question in another form, Is Christianity unique, and if so, in what does its uniqueness consist? It must be clear that when the word unique is used here it has a very definite connotation. There are two usages of the word. It may be used in the sense of "distinctive" or "unusual," "one and only"; but this does not convey the full meaning intended here. Every religion is unique in this sense. There is no other quite like it; it is that of which there is only one; it has something which makes it distinctive and marks it off as one of a kind. Sometimes, it is to be feared, the word is used in this way in speaking of Christianity, and then it means little more than that one oak leaf is not exactly like any other oak leaf. But the word unique has a fuller and more definite connotation when it conveys the sense of "superior," "unrivalled," "having no equal," "single in excellence," and other such phrases and words to be found in the dictionaries. And with all the audacity which is required to make use of the word in that sense, we intend that meaning here in speaking of Christianity as unique.

A number of different attitudes have been taken by Christian men and women as they have compared Christianity and the other religions. On the one extreme are those who see only evil in the non-Christian religions and do not believe that God has revealed himself even to a limited degree through their sages and seers and holy men. On the other side is a small but influential group of men and women in Western lands who can see little if any fundamental difference between religions, Christianity included. And in between these extremes are the great majority of Christian students, who are able to discover much good in other systems and yet find a peculiar quality in Christianity which differentiates it essentially from all others.

Such differences in attitude have made their appearance comparatively recently among those interested in the Christian world mission. In the early eighties theological cleavages began to appear in the ranks of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational), and a conflict was waged for years over the status of the heathen before God and the possibility of a second probation.[1] The controversy raised questions which have divided Protestant Christians ever since. At the same time that this particular contest was being fought out within the bounds of one mission board and one denomination, a movement came into existence and ran an interesting and suggestive course for a few years. In the year 1887 the American Unitarian Association sent a missionary to Japan. This representative preferred not to be considered a missionary but an envoy or an ambassador who had come to "express the sympathy of the Unitarians of America for progressive religious movements in Japan, and give all necessary information to the leaders of religious thought and action in that country." It was stated that "the errand of Unitarianism in Japan is based upon the now familiar idea of the 'sympathy of religions.' With the conviction that we are messengers of distinctive and valuable truths which have not here been emphasized, and that in return there is much in your faith and life which to our harm we have not emphasized, receive us not as theological propagandists but as messengers of the new gospel of human brotherhood in the religious life of mankind." [2] These excerpts are sufficient to indicate what the attitude of the representatives of Unitarianism in Japan was. Christianity might be called unique in the same sense that Buddhism was unique, without thinking of either as superior or unequalled.

We come closer home in the reports of missionary conferences held since the beginning of the century. The volume on *The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions* in the report of the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 (commonly called "Edinburgh 1910") calls for some comment. There is frank discussion of the relation of our faith to others, the good in these non-

[1] See Williston Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States*, pp. 416-21.

[2] Cary, *op. cit.*, II, 199.

Christian religions being pointed out, but there seems to have been no serious issue raised which caused men to take sides. The position might be summed up by quoting from the section entitled "General Conclusions." Mention is made of "two very notable points":

> The first of these is the practically universal testimony that the true attitude of the Christian missionary should be one of true understanding and as far as possible, of sympathy, ... that the missionary should seek for the nobler elements in the non-Christian religions and use them as steps to higher things, that in fact all these religions without exception disclose elemental needs of the human soul which Christianity alone can satisfy, and that in their higher forms they plainly manifest the working of the Spirit of God. . . . .
>
> But, along with this generous recognition of all that is true and good in these religions, there goes also the universal and emphatic witness to the absoluteness of the Christian faith.[3]

The situation had changed by the time the next world missionary conference was held—the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, held in 1928. The first World War had intervened between the Edinburgh and Jerusalem meetings, and the changed conditions are clearly indicated. For the first time in any great Christian gathering it was recognized that the world's great religions, Christianity included, were together on the same side in opposition to a common enemy of them all, secularism. Dr. Rufus M. Jones made the statement that "the greatest rival of Christianity in the world today is not Mohammedanism, or Buddhism, or Hinduism, or Confucianism, but a world-wide secular way of life and interpretation of the nature of things." He defined it as "a way of life and interpretation of life that include only the natural order of things and that do not find God, or a realm of spiritual reality, essential for life or thought." [4] There was little or no change in attitude as to the relation of Christianity to other faiths as compared with Edinburgh 1910. We discover the same full acknowledgement of good in other religions: "We wel-

[3] Pp. 267-68.

[4] Vol. I of report, *The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems of Thought and Life*, p. 230.

come every noble quality in non-Christian persons or systems as further proof that the Father, who sent his Son into the world, has nowhere left himself without witness." [5] We find also the same unequivocal declaration of the place of Christ as the unique revelation of God, whose gospel is the one saving message for all people everywhere.[6] Fear was expressed, however, by several speakers that the recognition of good in other religions might be carried too far, that there was danger of syncretism, in which the sharp-cutting edge of the Christian message would be blunted and might lose its appeal; but there was no serious clash of opinions.

A real turning point in the discussion was that with which Protestant missionary circles, particularly in America, were brought face to face in 1932 by the appearance of a volume entitled *Re-thinking Missions, a Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years.* It was the joint work of a committee known as the Commission of Appraisal, which worked over an enormous mass of material collected during several years by a body of experts sent to the mission lands to make a first-hand investigation of facts. This expensive procedure was made possible through the generosity of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The chairman of the commission, and the one who had most to do in preparation of the final report embodied in *Re-thinking Missions,* was Professor William E. Hocking, highly honored as a philosopher and deeply respected as a Christian interested in the missionary enterprise. Our concern in going to this volume at this time is to ascertain its stand on the question before us, the attitude of Christianity toward the other religions.

The publication of this volume burst like a bombshell upon the thinking Christian public in America. It was drastic and even revolutionary. The many valuable findings and recommendations contained in the latter part of the volume were obscured by the almost complete attention given perforce to the first four or five chapters dealing with the Christian gospel and its relation to other religions. The statements which startled the missionary world were those which

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 410.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 383 ff.

placed Christianity more or less on an equality with other religions. This was done to the extent that if the viewpoint of the book were accepted, the reason for sending missionaries would become markedly different from that which had actuated the missionary enterprise in other years. Nowhere, be it remembered, is there any hint that Christ is not needed in any country or that missionaries should not be sent by our churches to carry his gospel to men in other lands. All were at one at this point, no matter what differences might exist elsewhere. The differences, however, soon emerged. The non-Christian religions were presented as having so much good and as being able to contribute so much to the moral and religious life of the people where they are found that the demand for what Christianity has to offer seemed to be considerably attenuated. The motive for taking it was so altered that many began to ask whether there was any urgent need to take the gospel to them at all. Such were the statements made in many books and articles as the opposition to the positions presented was voiced far and wide. The seriousness of the issue was felt both by liberals and conservatives.

The idea advocated was that of combining what we have in Christianity with the contribution of other religious and thus arriving at a new synthesis, the product of our religion plus other religions. The report is just as sensitive to the danger of secularism as the Jerusalem report, and just as insistent that Christianity and the other religions have in secularism a common foe far more dangerous than any opposition which one religion may offer another. But the further step is the significant one. There is *"the necessity that the modern mission make a positive effort, first of all to know and understand the religions around it, then to recognize and associate itself with whatever kindred elements there are in them."* [7] This statement alone is not at all out of harmony with the attitude expressed both at Edinburgh and at Jerusalem. It would not have stirred up the storm which immediately broke out. But when one reads further that the missionary "will look forward, not to the destruction of these religions, but to their continued coexistence with Christianity, even stimulating the other in growth to-

[7] *Re-thinking Missions,* p. 33. Italics in the original report.

ward the ultimate goal, unity in the completest religious truth," [8] he wonders whether the mutual stimulation which is indicated does not hinder, or even make impossible, the declaration that Jesus Christ is in any effective sense *the* Savior of the World. *Re-thinking Missions* would seem to indicate that Christ is to share that task with others and not retain his unique position.

But, says the report, "The uniqueness of Christianity is in no way compromised by the developments we have been describing." [9] And a section follows in which a number of features which are more or less distinctive of Christianity are splendidly presented. But when all that has been said the question arises: Is not the real uniqueness of Christianity compromised if uniqueness is taken in the sense of being merely *distinctive* rather than *superior,* as it clearly is in *Re-thinking Missions?* If we as Christians take from other religions anything fundamentally significant, just as we ask them to do from us, are they not to be looked upon as more or less equally needed in the essential items which each has to contribute? And does not uniqueness, in the sense we have adopted, disappear? It is here that the Christian hesitates. There are many good things in other faiths which call forth his appreciation and which he may bring into his Christian thinking, but this is a very different thing from yielding the claim that Christianity has a gospel which in itself is sufficient to the needs of all men.

Since the publication of *Re-thinking Missions,* Professor Hocking has returned to the task and has placed the Christian world in his debt by contributing to the discussion a volume entitled *Living Religions and a World Faith.* This debt is none the less heavy on those who differ from some of the positions taken than on those who find themselves approving them. The argument presents the issues so clearly that one can only be thankful for what he has done. We cannot here present the entire argument of Professor Hocking, though it is difficult to make any omissions if the force of his presentation is not to be lost. There is so much of value in the volume that every missionary student is under obligation to make it a subject of careful study.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 44.
[9] *Ibid.,* p. 49.

Professor Hocking is convinced that there must be a world faith. He cannot feel that we are justified to leave things as they are. In his own words, "The chief difficulty with this comfortable proposal is that the differences between religions are important." [10] He presents three ways to achieve this one world faith. The first he calls the way of "Radical Displacement." One of the difficulties that the reader feels is that Professor Hocking is not lacking in dogmatism in stating what is implied in this view and in forcing men into it when they do not feel it really describes their position and cannot fit into the bed he has prepared for them. The way he is describing—and of which he disapproves—makes it necessary for a non-Christian to decide between Christianity and his former religion. "There is indeed," he says, "a sense in which we may speak of an Only Way; no way which is counter to Truth can be a valid way; no way which is inimical to Life can be valid. . . . . But in the guise we have been considering, as an only way of God, this doctrine must be abandoned definitely and for all." [11] This viewpoint will be commented on later.

The second way is that of "Synthesis." "This way is an aspect of Liberalism. It is liberal in the sense of being unwilling to condemn as evil what is good in other faiths." [12] But with all this Professor Hocking realizes there are dangers. There is the danger of "compromise through over-accommodation," that of "purely romantic appreciation," and that of "moral and mental idleness." [13] He is in no sympathy with "breadth acquired by relaxation." [14] Still he holds that "there is something not alone valid but necessary in the process of Synthesis. . . . . Hence I venture to propose that *no religion can become a religion for Asia which does not fuse the spiritual genius of Asia with that of Western Christianity.*" [15] And with this it is hard for any of us to find fault.

Professor Hocking's third way to a world faith is that to which he has given the name "Reconception." Unfortunately, it is not entirely

[10] *Living Religions and a World Faith*, p. 139.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 177.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 178-79.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 180.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

clear what is meant, and several reviewers have been somewhat puzzled by the use of the term. But this much seems to be clear: each religion is to think through anew its own meaning, not alone, but together with the other religions with which it comes in contact. Each is to define as nearly as possible the meaning of its essence, its central, determinative core; and when this is done it will be found that all religions will inevitably try "to include what they regard as significant in the others. This makes again for a growing resemblance among religions—that is, among the conceptions of the essence of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, that emerge." [16] What Professor Hocking is exceedingly anxious to avoid is competition among religions, that is, of the kind which seeks to displace other religions and win allegiance for one religion from among those who have been devoted to another faith. This, he feels, makes for unfriendly rivalry and antagonism. He does see a place for a "competition to understand and include, a rivalry as to which religion can best express the meaning of the rest." [17] But this is not what the missionary enterprise in the past has contemplated. To accomplish this result would necessitate a new institution or type of conduct, "not to supplant that mission [the usual type of Protestant mission] but to supplement it." [18] He would have institutes or meeting places where there might be free interchange between scholars of different faiths, but where there would be no propaganda and no thought of making converts on the part of any.

Enough has been stated to exhibit the method of approach which Professor Hocking would institute. What Christian missionary who is facing the situation in his field realistically could but wish that the essence of each religion might be so stated that it would be apparent to all? But is there any likelihood that if this were accomplished it would have the effect that Professor Hocking hopes for? Might the result not be the exact opposite? Might it not show that the likenesses are more or less superficial and that the differences are more deep-rooted and vital than had been supposed? As the argument is read and reread it would seem that, with his deep and sincere appreciation of

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Christianity and of Jesus Christ as its determinative center, Professor Hocking has not sufficiently seen, or given a place for, the fact that a religion is not a collection of facts and attitudes and doctrines but a loyalty to what lies at its center, and that this loyalty is an exclusive thing demanding one's all so completely that it fills his life and leaves no place for any other. In the case of Christianity this center of loyalty is Jesus Christ, the manifestation of God himself, who can demand no less than all of a man's devotion and love. This does not mean that one should fail in seeing and discovering what is good and worthy in other religions, but it does mean that there can be but one central allegiance, which excludes a "reconception" such as would throw that determinative factor into the discussion as an item subject to change or alteration. At its center a religion—and that is particularly true of Christianity—is an indivisible whole, which can be taken only as a whole, without destroying or emasculating it. Later in his discussion Professor Hocking picks out this feature of Christianity and says, "Christianity is the only religion which inclines to substitute its founder for its entire doctrine, and knows that it has gained rather than lost by so doing." [19] But even that clear statement does not dominate his argument and settle questions which are otherwise insoluble. When it comes to this central and determinative decision, how can there be anything but a radical displacement? That does not mean that a Confucianist must turn away from everything in his Confucianism, and the same is true of a Moslem or a Hindu. There is good in these religions which need not be discarded. But that is a very different thing from the attempt to give loyalty to Jesus Christ and still hold fast to a loyalty to some other object of devotion or worship. A human being is so constituted that he cannot be an integrated personality and have a divided allegiance. He must come to a decision, and that inevitably means turning away from one and adhering to another. Of course, there is a common religious nature in every man: there are the same desires and aspirations, and the laws governing religious development are the same—all this is most evident, as every student of the psychology of religion knows. But that is not the point of significance. A re-

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

ligion is what it is, not because of its subjective attitudes, but because of its object of worship, the God to whom the worshiper offers his devotion and his life; and there is a world of difference between the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and any other divine being.

Professor Hocking makes the charge that "Christianity is not yet ready to serve as a World Religion."[20] That there are defects in Christianity as embodied in the empirical Christian church, no informed Christian would deny. No enemy of the Christian church could go farther in exposing the weaknesses of organized Christianity than Christians themselves. Human nature being what it is, and church members and leaders being at such different stages of maturity as they are, we cannot expect a perfect church; there never has been, and so far as it is possible to see ahead there is little prospect that there ever will be, though—and this must be said in equal candor on the other side—there is good reason to expect marked improvement in the decades and centuries which lie before us. But that, again, is not the important point; we must see the primary place of Christ, the revelation of God in history, complete, perfect, and unrivalled, who appears to his followers as the world's only hope, whom they are bound to carry to all men everywhere and urge upon them as their Savior and Master. Professor Hocking believes that too, for he holds that all people must have the same God, just as they must "have in common science, logic and the standard of right"; but he comes to what seems to many of his readers an unrealistic conclusion when he declares that "having the same god might conceivably be achieved under religions nominally different," and then adds, "The philosopher's god is the same being under whatever name."[21] In this statement he has left the realm of religion and entered that of philosophy. Of course, the two are closely related, but it is to be remembered that the God of the philosopher as a philosopher is more or less of an abstraction. He is not the God who can win the devotion and loyalty of needy men and women. In religion the demand is for a God more available, who can meet the craving for a being who can be trusted, worshiped, and loved. And when the divine beings of the various religions are compared

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

one with another, it becomes apparent that they are not alike but different; and these differences, instead of disappearing, grow more significant the farther one penetrates into their meaning. After all, this is the crux of the whole matter.

Professor Hocking states his belief that the figure of Christ will in the end be exalted above all others. He further holds that in the one religion which will ultimately prevail, the worship of all people will be directed to the God revealed by Jesus Christ. But, very unfortunately, this conclusion is obscured at a number of significant places by statements which compromise the uniqueness of Christianity and which make it exceedingly difficult to see how the religion of Jesus Christ can be proclaimed in such a manner that men will be led to give themselves to him and his cause with the kind of devotion that will not only save them from their sins but give them the stamina to stand up under persecution.

Following ten years after the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928, the next meeting was held in 1938 in Madras, India. A few months before the conference convened a volume was published entitled *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,* written by Professor Hendrik Kraemer, of the University of Leiden. It is stated in the Preface that "this book has been written at the request of the International Missionary Council in order to serve as material for the World Missionary Conference in 1938." The author goes further in making clear his purpose, which is to "state the fundamental position of the Christian Church as a witness-bearing body in the modern world, relating this to different conflicting views of the attitude to be taken by Christians toward other faiths, and dealing in detail with the evangelistic approach to the great non-Christian faiths." [22] It is a great book filled with the results of long, scholarly research. The sections dealing with the non-Christian religions are most illuminating and present insights and viewpoints not to be found elsewhere. Here, however, we must seek chiefly to understand what Professor Kraemer means by Christianity in relation to God's purpose in the world.

[22] P. v.

The best approach to such an understanding is by study of a phrase used frequently in the volume, "radical biblical realism." What does the author mean by it? He was made to realize after the book had been published that the phrase was open to misunderstanding and so sought to define it with complete clarity in the postconference volume on *The Authority of the Faith,* Volume I of "The Madras Series." Here he says:

> The Christian revelation as the record of God's self-disclosing revelation in Jesus Christ is absolutely *sui generis.* It is the story of God's sovereign redeeming acts having become decisively and finally manifest in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, in whom God became flesh and revealed His grace and truth. I coined for this conception the term "biblical realism" in order to express the idea that the Bible, the human and in many ways historically conditioned document of God's acts of revelation, consistently testifies to divine acts and plans in regard to the salvation of mankind and the world, and not to religious experiences or ideas.[23]

To make it more clear he adds that the Bible is "the record of God's thoughts and acts in regard to mankind and not . . . . a tale about the pilgrimage of the human soul toward God." [24] We may come now to his direct statements about the non-Christian religions.

Professor Kraemer declares early in the discussion that his way of expressing the relation of Christianity to the other religions is "not that of continuity, but of discontinuity," [25] or uniqueness without continuity. It is in sharp contrast to the view of *Re-thinking Missions* and of Professor Hocking, which might be phrased "continuity with doubtful uniqueness." Professor Kraemer is quite sure that while Christ is the fulfillment of what lies deep in human nature, "this fulfillment . . . . never represents the perfecting of what has been before. . . . . This fundamental discontinuity . . . . *excludes* the possibility and legitimacy of a *theologia naturalis* in the sense of a science of God and man, conceived as an imperfect form of revelation, introductory to the world of divine grace in Christ." [26] The other religions are not to be taken as a "schoolmaster to Christ." Christ "stands in contradiction to

[23] *The Authority of the Faith,* p. 1.
[24] *Ibid.,* p. 2.
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.,* pp. 3-4.

the power and wisdom of man. Perhaps in some respects it were proper to speak of contradictive or subversive fulfillment." [27] Strange to say, he is at this point in agreement with the extreme Indian liberal, Judge Chenchiah, who declares, "If we take the 'revelation' claimed in different religions, we have to confess that they do not piece together or form an intelligible whole. The Vedas, the Koran, the Gospel do not make a coherent scheme. They do not even answer the same questions." [28]

In this conservative attitude Professor Kraemer takes his stand with Karl Barth. He says, "The present situation in comparative religion is that, having no standard of reference as norm, all religions are conceived as more or less worthy vehicles of divine revelation." [29] "Barth's theology is a merciless war-cry against this persuasive and omnipresent relativism." [30] But Professor Kraemer will not travel with Barth the full distance. He feels that "even in this fallen world God shines through in a broken, troubled way: in reason, in nature and in history." [31] He would rather agree with Emil Brunner "in favor of a critical and right kind of natural theology," [32] as inconsistent as that may seem. In fact, Professor Kraemer is not consistent at a number of points. He changes, as Principal A. G. Hogg has suggested, as he agrees with Barth or moves away from him. A quotation from Professor Walter M. Horton, who was present at Madras, will bring this out:

> I was glad to hear Dr. Kraemer say, in response to a statement by Principal Hogg, that he considers God to have been wrestling with man's presumptions and striving to break through into human life as truly in non-Christian lands as in those which have been touched directly by Christian influences; but I was surprised and confounded to hear him add that, in all the great expanse of human history and culture outside of the biblical line of revelation, he could see only "here and there," "now and then," a faint gleam of something that might conceivably be interpreted as a genuine divine self-utterance.[33]

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[28] Quoted *ibid.*, p. 5.
[29] *The Christian Message*, p. 118.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 120.
[32] *The Authority of the Faith*, pp. 146 f.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Principal Hogg, of the Madras Christian College, is very deeply interested in this question of a divine revelation. Can it be authenticated in the lives of non-Christians? After his long experience with educated Indians, students and others, his unhesitating conclusion is that it can. He believes that God has spoken to men beyond the bounds of Christianity. This does not prevent him from believing in the uniqueness of the Christian message, but the ground of his belief differs from that of Professor Kraemer. His words are:

> It is not here affirmed, as Dr. Kraemer's line of discussion at least appears to suggest, that Christianity is unique because it is created by the *occurrence* of revelation. Without the revealing initiative of God there would be *no* religions. Christianity is unique because of the unique *content* of the revelation of which it is the apprehension and the product, and to which it bears witness.[34]

Here are two extremes: the view of *Re-thinking Missions* and Professor Hocking on the one hand, and the view of Professor Kraemer on the other. We have commented on both and called in others to do the same. It now remains to present as briefly as possible a constructive and positive position of our own. In the light of the discussion the view now to be presented might be called that of uniqueness together with continuity—and to that we now proceed.

What difference does it make whether Christianity is unique or not? There is much more at stake than the integrity of the world mission as an enterprise. That is a means to an end—a means which has changed form, as we have seen, several times in the course of missionary expansion and may change again. But if Christianity is not unique, the motive back of the enterprise is likely to weaken and in a generation or two the momentum of the original impulse might so slacken that the work could not go on. Christianity has not always been missionary in actual practice; there have been ups and downs in the course of its expansion; but whenever Christianity has become revivified after a period of stagnation, the missionary fires have begun again to burn. Always the reappreciation of the meaning of Jesus

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 115 f.

Christ, and the reappearance of vital personal experience of his presence in the human heart have resulted in the rekindling of these fires. The connection is not difficult to discover. When Christ is experienced as indispensable in any human heart, the conviction arises that men need him and cannot get along without him no matter what else they may have of moral or religious equipment. This is true of all sorts of men, the educated as well as the simple, unschooled follower of the Lord Jesus. The man who can go to the literature and become a student of other religions as well as his own has the advantage of being able to go beyond his primary religious experience; he realizes how deeply his fellow human beings without Christ are in need of what his religion can do for them. This, the other man who works with his hands from morning till night is unable to do. But at bottom the two men are in exactly the same position. Each knows what Christ means to him; each knows the wonder of what he possesses, which those without Christ do not know. The significant thing is not the difference between a Christian in a Christian land and a pagan in a pagan land, but between a Christian anywhere and a man without Christ anywhere. When anyone who is in vital contact with Jesus Christ realizes what this relation means to him, he has essentially all that is needed to make him truly missionary in spirit. The contrast just presented is always that which matters most, with this as a real difference, that the man in a non-Christian country does not have the opportunity to enter into the experience in Christ unless it is taken to him—and that is what the Christian world mission is for.

So the answer to the question, What difference does it make whether Christianity is unique or not? is simply this: if Christianity is not unique there is no special point in taking it to others. If the motive is to share its good points in a mutual interchange with other religions which have their good points, the element of urgency, at least, is weakened; we are likely to feel that men can get along at least fairly well as they are. It would be a splendid thing to add to their resources what Christianity has to offer and for Christianity to receive needed additions from them, but there would be no tragic lack if this should not be done. Yes, it is true that we today have a somewhat different outlook from that of our predecessors, that our interpretation of the

faith is not just the same, that the ultimate fate of those who have never had the opportunity to hear of Christ is not pictured in the same lurid colors—all this is true, and yet there is no essential difference. If we do not have a message which is needed so deeply that individuals, and society, and nations cannot arrive at their best, cannot throw off the incubus of sin and low ideals, cannot live a life on the highest levels, cannot be rightly related to God without it, there is no way to account for missions in the past or in the present, and there is little promise of a continuance of the enterprise in the future.

As has been indicated in statements already made, the uniqueness of Christianity is to be found in Jesus Christ, who revealed a God quite different from any other divine being. He is the God of holy or righteous love, made known in his innermost nature by his only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This does not imply that God has not made himself known in other ways and in other religions. It does mean, however, that in Jesus Christ there is a quality of revelation which is so different that no other can compare with it. It gives men an assurance which can come in no other way. Far down under every other desire of the human spirit there is the longing for confidence that the universe at its center is friendly; that God not only exists and is just but cares supremely for men and for their highest good; in other words, that God is a God of love. It is Jesus who has answered this longing so completely and uniquely that whenever men have entered into the experience of God in him they have found peace and have been filled with the assurance that no matter what may happen to them they cannot

drift
Beyond his love and care.

This assurance does not come in the form of mathematical certainty or scientific demonstration. It is in an entirely different realm, the realm of human relations, which are not altogether amenable to scientific investigation. We can only reach what is called moral certainty in the deeper things of life, those which have to do with love and hope and aspiration. We must, however, be able to place our dependence on that which we are convinced is worthy of our confidence. In the

most significant relations we have as human beings with each other and with society and with the spiritual world, we must always be able to make the venture of faith or we are lost. This is no arbitrary demand but inheres in the nature of things, because we are made that way and can act in no other fashion to achieve steadiness and the fulfillment of our deepest aspirations. Every kind, unselfish act on the part of any other human being makes it easier to make the venture. Family life with its devotion and service to the younger and the older members of the circle leads on to greater assurance that there is a kindliness in the order of things on which we can at least partially depend. So it runs through the entire gamut of human life. God, we believe, is conveying his spirit to men in all these multiform relations. The great good men and women, the towering, unselfish lovers of their kind, wherever they are to be found, furnish even larger windows into the heart of God. But it is in Christ Jesus that God made so complete a revelation of himself and of his character and did it so unmistakably that nothing like it has ever occurred at any other time or in any other place. A Christian stakes all he has and is on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. He makes the supreme venture: "He bets his life," as Donald Hankey put it, "that there is a God." The Christian has a ready answer to the inquirer who asks him what kind of God he has. He can always answer, He is like Jesus Christ. So true and far-reaching is this fundamental declaration that when it is seen in its full significance it may be affirmed that no pronouncement has ever been made about God which rises to so high a level. Jesus Christ reveals God as he is, and in terms which we can understand.

So we believe in the uniqueness of Christianity, and we also believe in its continuity with other religions. This is not contradictory but necessary, with the conception of God and his revelation which has been presented. God has not left himself without witness among those who have never heard of Jesus Christ.[35] It is as easy to run to one extreme as to the other in stating the relation of our faith to others, and both extremes are not only unfortunate but dangerous. The position

[35] See Acts 14:15-17; Rom. 2:14-16.

of one who believes in uniqueness without continuity has its dangers, because it does not face facts and, by being unwilling to acknowledge the good in other religions, builds up an intolerant attitude which injures the one who holds it and harms the cause he represents. He gives evidence of loss of perspective, want of a sense of appreciation of what is noble and unselfish in men and women who, with their light, are striving to live uprightly. This attitude surely is not like Jesus as we discover him in the gospel story. But there is an equal danger in the thought of one who believes in continuity but finds it difficult or impossible to think of his religion as unique, not merely distinctive but essentially unequalled. This position, too, does not face all the facts. It is likely to minimize differences and so magnify likenesses that one religion blends into another and loses its individuality. It is likely to allow tolerance to shade off into indifference so that it does not make much difference what a man's religion is provided he is sincere. By affirming that all religions are ways to God and will lead to God, religion becomes a highway so broad that vagueness of belief and a hazy moral ideal are all that is left. The gate into life is narrow, as Jesus said. It does make a world of difference what a man believes, but there are many who seem not to be able to see this, hence the shiftiness and looseness of their positions and the want of conviction in their religious opinions. As was once said by Professor Hastings Rashdall, "The Dean of St. Paul's has spoken quite truly of a certain class of superior people who seem to regard themselves as honorary members of all religions except their own." [36]

There is good in all religions, but this need not lessen the uniqueness of our own. To hold both these views and allow neither to override the other may not be easy, but it is necessary. We must not only be candid; we must actually be earnestly on the lookout to discover the good any religion may possess and be intent to make the most of it. But still the question arises: Is this double position really possible of achievement, and, if it were, does it not imply such an emphasis on the one side or on the other that necessarily there is a lack of stability of conviction, especially in the uniqueness of Christianity? Let

[36] *Principles and Precepts*, p. 174.

us realize that such a double attitude is not confined to religion but may characterize us in other relations. There is the fundamental loyalty of husband and wife, final and unalterable when there is genuine love and devotion. In no sense, at least in our society, does this involve a severing of relations with others. There can be deep appreciation of others, fellowship which is enriching and satisfying, with no suggestion of failure or weakness of the primary loyalty. In fact, once a man or woman has found a mate and has entered into the full realization of the wonder of that relation, there may be, and very often is, a fullness and naturalness in contacts with others which can scarcely be looked for in those not so fortunately situated. This is not a complete analogy, but it will serve our purpose. As it is in marriage, so it is in religion. When one is firmly anchored in his own life and is no longer likely to shift from one point of view to another, he is in a position to view with calmness and candor other opinions different from his own and give a judgment steadied by his own deep convictions without fear that he is likely at any moment to run across something which will remove him from his moorings. When he is captured and possessed by one who has become to him Savior and Master and has his allegiance thus firmly fixed, he is a deeply satisfied person and can appreciate all that is beautiful and good and true in everything else, even though it may be found in other religions and in men who feel they are following duty's path in opposing or even persecuting him.

There is a paradox in Christianity which is part of its uniqueness. Christianity is an experience in the lives of its followers, and it is to a certain point to be recommended by themselves and by their conduct. It certainly should be possible to commend Christianity by its product in life; did not Jesus show the way, and did he not confer upon his followers the enabling Spirit? The facts justify this claim in many Christian characters. The great misfortune is that the facts do not allow us to point to all as examples of what the gospel can do, or to any of us as complete exemplars of the Christian spirit. This fact of failure, however, has another side. Christianity makes such lofty demands that the disparity between ideals and practice is wider than in any other religion. We are none of us the men we should be, and

the more progress we make, the more keenly do we feel our own unworthiness. The most saintly characters are those who feel it most deeply. There is no danger, no matter how high we may climb, of self-satisfaction. We are more open to criticism than any others; we are held up to a higher standard. It is hard to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

But in the Christian religion we have a recourse not available to others. We have the God revealed in Jesus, in whom no fault can be found, Son of God and Son of Man; and we are able to hold him up even when we are conscious of imperfection and failure in ourselves. Even then the demand is exceedingly severe, for only sincere hands can lift him up before men. But the fact that we can do this at all; that we have at our disposal a revelation of God which is able to satisfy the human heart; that he is the Living One, ever ready to come into the lives of men—where is there any other religion like that? Christianity is unique because Jesus Christ is unique, and he is with us, now and forever.

Part Four

THE STRATEGY OF THE WORLD MISSION

Chapter XV

AIMS AND METHODS

As it has been made clear that this volume is not a history of missions or a history of religion, so now it must be said that the chapters in this part of the volume are not intended to be a handbook for missionary administrators either at the home base or on the mission field. They are a study of the principles lying back of missionary administration either at home or abroad.

Strategy differs from tactics. One has to do with the general plan of a campaign and the principles on which it is based; the other deals with the carrying out of the plan in its details, the various instrumentalities, agencies, and methods which are thought necessary to arrive at the aim which has been chosen. Tactics must be the constant study of those responsible for the conduct of the missionary enterprise. It is indispensable, but quite different from the study of the principles on which the world mission is built, the rationale of the enterprise as a whole. The question we are asking here is: What is the purpose of the Christian world mission; what are the aims it tries to achieve? To arrive at these goals involves methods, and what we have in mind is to deal with the various methods in so far as such a study will clarify the relation of aims and methods in the conduct of the enterprise. It should be said, however, that beyond the strategy which we shall discuss here, there are ultimate purposes which can only be taken up later in considering the relation of the world mission to the ecumenical church and to the Kingdom of God. The question here is: What is a Christian missionary with all the methods he uses attempting to accomplish? This seems simple, and yet it is a question which is today the subject of sharp controversy in almost every country.

The purpose of the world mission is primarily that of making known the gospel of God's love to men in Jesus Christ. That is the

meaning of evangelism in its broadest sense. A missionary is one sent to proclaim in the most effective manner the good news of the Kingdom of God. We hope and expect that many things will result in the lives of those to whom the message is taken, but, first of all, missions is a declaration of what God is and of his purpose for men as revealed in Christ. We are to let the world know that God is love and that all men everywhere are included in his purpose. So much is clear. It is only when the next step is taken that difficulty arises—when we ask: Should it not also be evident that the reason why the gospel is proclaimed is that men should accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and thus become converts to Christianity? It is the making of converts which is the bone of contention. Opposition is more often raised to the use of the special term "proselytizing," because this word is thought to carry with it the idea that when one religion proselytizes from another, more interest is shown in the glory and growth of one's own group than in the good which may be done to those who are thus brought over, or "stolen" from the other.[1] But Christianity, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, has always had the aim to secure converts, so we are bound to consider carefully what this involves.

The making of converts, no matter how it is done, has frequently caused offence; it is really difficult to see how it could be otherwise. As has already been suggested, the Jewish synagogue shows the most marked antipathy to such activity among its people. To give one illustration, we may quote from a Jewish rabbi in a statement in the daily press:

> It is an insult to want to force one's faith on other people; Jews have too much respect for good people, be their faith what it may, to force upon them another faith. Those who are good do not need to be converted to Judaism; those who are bad Judaism does not require. For 2,000 years

[1] Interesting to say, the term "propaganda," which involves the same idea, originated within the missionary enterprise. In 1622 there was established in the Roman Catholic Church the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, the "College for the Propagation of the Faith," with headquarters in the city of Rome, which continues to the present day as the central directing agency of all the missions to non-Christian countries undertaken by that church.

the Jews have taught that the pious of all peoples have a share in the world to come. Put into modern language what else does this mean but that goodness by whomever practiced is goodness still whether it be Jewish, Christian or Mohammedan.[2]

This is rather a strange position for one to take who belongs to a religion which for a hundred years and probably longer gave itself to widespread and vigorous proselytism and succeeded in winning many converts, a religion which today believes that it is the final religion and that someday all men will acknowledge its God as the God of the universe and join with its people in worshiping him. It also seems strange that anyone should think that the only way a Jew might be won to another faith would be to have it forced upon him, as the rabbi suggests. There has been all too much compulsion in the past, but thousands of Jews who have embraced Christianity have come of their own free will and with no sense of compulsion save that of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The same objection is raised in India by Hindus. It may not be denied that Christianity has a message for India; what is looked on askance is the purpose to draw men and women away from Hinduism into another religious community. This is very decidedly Mr. Gandhi's view. He is grateful for the service which educational and medical missions are rendering to the Indian people, but the thought that they should be made converts fills him with aversion. His viewpoint has been expressed on many occasions. Recently an Indian, who is a member of one of the Christian communities, and who dedicates a small volume to Mahatma Gandhi, who, he says, "made Jesus and his message real to me," put the matter thus: "It is the present writer's Christian conviction that Indian Christianity will realize itself, will save itself, in the only sense in which its Master would have it save itself, by losing itself in the larger life of India and of the world to be in the Universal Church of Humanity."[3] That is, Christianity should not seek to make converts, but should add its

[2] *Ohio State Journal*, Dec. 29, 1928.

[3] George, *Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity*, p. 16.

distinctive teaching to that of Hinduism and thus perform its mission to India.

From a somewhat different viewpoint, and yet with the same resulting conviction, Mr. P. Chenchiah, Chief Judge of the Native State of Pudukottah, a member of the Madras World Missionary Conference, addresses himself to the problem. These are his statements: "The policy of individual or mass conversion with the avowed object of forming the converts into a community or a church should be abandoned. The idea that a person should be either a Hindu or a Christian should be relinquished." He speaks of "creating an atmosphere rather than a solid nucleus, whether a community or a church." [4] It should be said at once that this view found little or no approval among the members of the conference and goes beyond the viewpoint of other Indian writers in the composite volume from which it is taken. A little thought upon India's religious history might have given pause to the advocacy of ideas such as those held by Mr. George and Judge Chenchiah. Hinduism is a spongelike religion with no definite form or organization and is likely to absorb into itself any other religion with which it comes into contact unless that religion possesses sufficient rigidity of form and definiteness of content to prevent it from losing its identity. This has happened before, and it might happen again. One of the most impressive lessons in the entire history of religion is the disappearance of Buddhism from India, the land of its birth and of its founder Gautama Buddha. It lost out and disappeared chiefly because it was not sufficiently distinctive to maintain itself through the centuries in the presence of an all-absorbing Hinduism. True, it made a contribution, mostly in a negative way. India had run red with the blood of animal sacrifices, and they for the most part ceased because of the influence of the Buddhist doctrine of "ahimsa," "no-harm" to all animal creation. But there was little else on which one can definitely put his finger. Buddhism disappeared, and with it almost all of the teaching which had for several centuries been predominant in the land.

[4] *Rethinking Christianity in India,* Appendix, pp. 50 f.

Many devout Hindus would be glad to worship Jesus Christ, and some actually do so; but he is to be worshiped with, and alongside, other deities, each in turn or according to the desire or need of the devotee. But the result is that the worshiper not only remains a Hindu in name but is a Hindu and not a Christian in his outlook on life and his attitude to divinity and to the hereafter. Christ and his religion would be on the way to the almost complete oblivion which has befallen the Buddha. The latter is known as one of the avatars or lesser incarnations of Vishnu, but that does not mean that what the Buddha stood for has any influence in the life of worshipers. He and his religion are dead as a vital force in Indian life and religion. So it undoubtedly would be with Christianity. A religion might be willing to lose its formal identity for the sake of a larger life; but the case is very different when this would include—as it most surely would in the case of Christianity—the loss of its teachings, its life, and its spirit. When the very thing which Christianity comes to bring is compromised, there is nothing for a follower of Christ to do but proclaim his gospel as an offer to men to leave the old and establish new connections even though doing so may involve serious consequences.

Let us look a little more closely at this matter. Christianity claims to initiate men into a new life of unique quality. This experience comes through the relation established with God in Jesus Christ and becomes effective through the process of conversion, an experience as varied as are the personal characteristics of those involved. It is followed by ritualistic and sacramental acts prescribed by the particular church which the convert may join, but in and through it all the essential fact is the contact between the believer and his God. The new relation has wrapped up in it the possibility of a glowing Christian experience, growing in fullness and certainty as the years pass. This is a distinctive experience conditioned by the revelation of God in Christ which can come only to those who give themselves to him. The experience is different from the natural goodness which is to be found among choice souls everywhere; a very special grace comes flowing into the soul of one who has opened his heart to

the Lord Jesus and who is transformed more and more into the likeness of his Savior and Master.

Professor A. D. Nock has called attention to the significance of conversion to another faith in the days of the early church. "By conversion," he says, "we mean the reorientation of the soul of the individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right. It is seen at its fullest in the positive response of a man to the choice set before him by the prophetic religions." [5] He is making comparison between what Judaism and Christianity required of men and women and the demands of Mithraism. Mithraism "might and would have won plenty of adherents, but it could not have founded a holy Mithraic Church throughout the world. . . . . There was . . . . in the rivals of Judaism and Christianity no possibility of anything which can be called conversion." [6] What we are calling attention to is that the fundamental aim of Christianity with its offer of salvation is a life and death matter. The Christian experience is something not only distinct but unique in the full meaning of that term. It offers the possibility of a life which cannot be had elsewhere and which possesses a combination of fineness, unselfishness, devotedness, and love unmatched anywhere else in the whole realm of religion. Boldness is required to make this claim, especially when examples of holy living are not as common as they should be and when the fullness of Christian experience has never been completely attained among men. Our Lord is the only one who ever reached the goal and lived a life so beautiful and true that it lures his followers on to further effort even though they realize constantly that they have not "attained, either were already perfect." In deep humility every true follower of Christ cannot but give testimony that he is the unworthy inheritor of "exceeding great and precious promises," without which life could not be the same and which he feels bound to pass on to those who have not entered into their meaning. And yet with all this the claim may be made, humbly but with confidence.

[5] *Conversion*, p. 7.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

But what about permeating the life of the people to whom we go with Christian ideals without aiming at definite conversion? Principal J. V. Job, of St. Columba's School in India, speaks of the widespread influence of Christianity far beyond the limits of the organized Christian Church and its direct work. Here is his inclusive statement:

> We see in this vast and surging movement various elements. There are those in it which are definitely against Christianity. There are others which are not against us and therefore, according to the long view and broad sympathy of our Lord, are for us. There are those who have not been mentioned above, who have lost their ancient moorings, have secretly anchored their souls in Christ—the other sheep of the Lord who are not yet within the fold. And there are those elements which are openly for Christ, as manifestations of new life within the Christian community in India.[7]

Here we find permeation in varying stages together with complete commitment to Christ. The important point to be held in mind is that permeation as such without individual conversions does not and cannot produce a fellowship or community after the Christian pattern, and without that there is no promise of continuance even of the permeating process. There must be a Christian nucleus, a growing band of Christian disciples fully committed to Jesus Christ and emulating his example if the fruits of Christianity are to ripen and be effective among the people of any land. The permeative work must be carried on, not as antagonistic to the more fundamental task, but as expressive of its spirit and indicating the full scope of the Christian influence.

Is the work of evangelism to be concerned wholly with individuals; or should it aim at groups, as in the mass movements among the outcastes of India? Ultimately, of course, the individual must be brought into immediate contact with God. Christianity has always laid emphasis on human personality, individual in its distinctiveness and of supreme worth. But taking human life as it is among such groups as the outcastes in India, where the individual counts for al-

[7] *Rethinking Christianity in India*, p. 6.

most nothing and where personality is little more than in embryo, the only effective approach seems to be through the natural grouping which has characterized their life for ages. They know no way of doing things except together as groups under the leadership of the head men of the village. To lead them out of their past in this way is effective, but it is only a beginning. As soon as possible there must be the individual appeal and the response one by one, or else nothing which can be depended on has been accomplished. We have tended to be too individualistic in Protestantism, failing to realize the high significance of the family and of larger groupings as a natural approach to the individuals in them. In the New Testament we have the record of whole families being baptized under the leadership of the head of the family.[8] So it was in the history of the conversion of northern Europe during the Middle Ages, with many evil features following upon what seem to be methods involving great dangers. And yet it is almost impossible to see how these people could have been touched, at least at the beginning, had tribes and small national groups not come over as a unit. The mistake was in not realizing that a long period of intensive training and individual attention was necessary if the true fruits of Christianity were to be developed.

Many methods are in use to bring the Christian message to bear on the life of the people of mission lands. Among them, however, four stand out as of special importance—evangelization, education, medical work, and agricultural missions. To classify in this fashion has its dangers. It might be inferred that the work of educational, medical, and agricultural missions was not to be thought of as evangelistic, and that would be to create an entirely erroneous impression. The solidarity of the missionary enterprise in its multiform activities lies in the fact that there is but one ultimate aim to be achieved through them all. Whether it be the task of evangelizing through direct preaching and other forms of pastoral work, or education, or medical work, or agriculture, the purpose which runs through them all is to make known the full meaning of the revelation of God in

[8] See Acts 16:15, 33.

Jesus Christ and to make it possible for all to enter intelligently into the new life which the acceptance of the gospel opens to them.

Bishop James M. Thoburn of India would on occasion tell of his own experience. He went to India passionately in earnest to "preach the gospel to the heathen," but he had not been there long before he found himself inevitably doing many things which he had never thought of as involved in his original purpose. There was a famine and as a result he found hundreds of homeless children on his hands. What could he do but care for them? The next step was their education, and so he found himself a schoolmaster, and later his school work had to be carried to the point where men could be trained for Christian work. So it went until there were higher schools and hospitals and other forms of work—all in addition to what he thought he had been called to do, "preach the gospel to the heathen." He had discovered that in order to make Christ known and to let men see what the love of God meant it was as necessary to care for men's bodies and see that they had at least the rudiments of education as it was to preach and baptize.

Medical missions make an immediate appeal to the human heart. We cannot turn away from suffering if we have a heart of compassion as Jesus had. And in addition we have his direct example. He went about doing good and healing all manner of diseases both of mind and body. He did not heal because it gave him an opportunity to preach but because men and women were in dire need. The primary motive in doing medical work on the mission field is not that it offers a wide-open door to evangelism but that it meets a need and shows what the God we declare is like. He is compassionate and full of tenderness and puts it into the hearts of his servants to deal with human need in whatever form it is to be found. It is a serious misconception of medical missions to conceive of them as merely a means to an end, to think of them only as offering an opportunity to evangelize. But on the other hand, it would be a strange missionary doctor or nurse who would feel that when the purely medical task had been done, his work was at an end. A missionary doctor is a missionary as well as a doctor and therefore is interested in more than the healing of the body. His patients are

human beings, in need of the gospel message as much as of what medical attention can accomplish, and he is there to minister to both needs. He is a doctor, and his task is to heal. He may be better trained as a physician of the body than of the soul, but—and this is the important point—because he is a missionary he is a physician of the soul as well as his evangelistic fellow worker and finds his chief glory in helping men and women realize through his ministrations the meaning of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Education stands on a somewhat different basis and must be approached from a different angle. Our religion is an intelligible thing and demands intelligence to understand it. Christianity is intended to minister to the whole man, the mind as well as the body. Should we fail here, we have made no provision for the capture of the entire personality. The significance of this side of our Christian task is in danger of being obscured in lands like our own where most of the functions of education have been taken over by the state. We simply take it for granted that our children will receive an education, frequently without realizing that education and religion must go together if both are to arrive at their highest goal. On the mission field until recent years education has had a very different aspect. It was most evident that if the missionary movement did not educate, no education would be given; and in addition, there would be no provision for leadership in the church. But even more serious would be the danger that the foundations would not be laid for understanding life and the world in which the new converts find themselves, not to speak of religion and the higher interests of the mind and heart.

The educational program has meant the maintenance of many kinds of institutions, all the way from the kindergarten to the university and professional school. Grave doubt has been expressed of the justification of these expensive institutions, especially those of the higher rank. No doubt with the rapid increase of the sense of responsibility on the part of governments for education, the keen need of missionary education will slacken; but care must be exercised lest any suggestion be allowed to circulate that religion, the religion of Christ which is now being offered men and women, is not vitally con-

cerned with the intellectual life of its people as well as their physical and spiritual life. In some countries, as in Turkey, almost the only form of missionary work which makes any appeal to the Moslem and which is legally possible is education. It has been a great demonstration of faith and patience that men and women have kept faithful to their task as teachers when they have been allowed no more direct approach and can make their impress solely by the presentation of scientific and historical truth and the example of godly lives. In other, more favored lands many of the noted national leaders have learned what it meant to be Christian in missionary institutions and have gone out into business, teaching, and government positions to exemplify the love of Christ in every contact which they make. And even when they have not become professing Christians, there has been a marked redirection in their thinking and their life purpose. Here is permeation at its highest, made possible because of a Christian purpose on the part of the teachers and of those who have stood behind them at the home base. Dr. E. Stanley Jones has spent most of his life in India in work among the educated classes and has seen very little direct result in definite conversions, but he is not satisfied. He rejoices in the good influence which has gone out from his endeavors but is convinced that the only basis of a lasting Christian influence is the presence of an increasing number of those who have made the great decision and have joined the ranks of those who, often in the presence of persecution, have severed their connection with their old religion and have counted it an honor to be numbered among the followers of Jesus Christ their Lord.

The argument for the agricultural mission is somewhat different and yet cogent. The economic condition of many people in mission lands is pitiable. It is hard to think of their becoming self-respecting and growing Christian men and women unless their fundamental economic needs are met in a way now entirely beyond their resources. As soon as a person becomes a Christian, new needs and desires are born with his new experience. He wants to be clean physically as well as mentally, and this can come only by an improvement of his economic condition. And soon, through other contacts of his new life, needs not dreamed of before come into existence; and if they

are not met the disappointment may lead to a reversion to his former condition, and it may be that "the last state of that man becometh worse than the first." Much more could be said, but the window into the lives of these people has been opened far enough to show the necessity of meeting other needs than those usually spoken of as spiritual if men are to be saved in the completeness of their personality and the entire extent of their corporate life.

So we come back to the unity of the missionary enterprise. We go to proclaim the love of God as revealed by Jesus Christ, and as we proceed we increasingly realize how wide-reaching is the task in which we are engaged. It is simple in its primary purpose; it is manifold in its operations.

Chapter XVI

THE WORLD MISSION AND NATIONALISM

The differences between the various nations and peoples and the cultures they have developed are a glorious fact, making possible a richness of life in the world which could not otherwise be found. Nationality is an elemental fact in the life of man. An internationalism which would blot out the distinctions between nations is a futile ideal; an internationalism which recognizes the permanence of differences and the rights of states to independent existence while it seeks to bring the nations into harmonious fellowship is the most needed thing politically in the world today.

Differences between nations call for independence under different forms of government, for government is one of the most characteristic features of culture and community life. A nation must develop its own government in its own way or fail to express one of the most unique features of its life. Many of us in the Western world believe there has been a slow but sure development through the ages out of absolutism toward democracy and that this indicates true progress in the life of mankind. We hold further that this development is intimately connected with the expansion and influence of the Christian religion. The Old Testament laid the foundations on which Jesus built his ideal of the worth of human personality, out of which ultimately came the emancipation of the spirit of man and the structure of the democratic state with its recognition of the rights of man to free participation in its control. It was none other than Friedrich Nietzsche who declared, "The democratic movement is the inheritance of the Christian movement." [1]

The claims of democracy are being challenged at the present time by the totalitarian state. In the words of Dr. J. H. Oldham, "One of the most striking changes in the past hundred years has been a

[1] *Beyond Good and Evil.*

prodigious expansion in the functions of the state." [2] His definition of this kind of state is so exact that it may well be quoted:

> The totalitarian state is a state which lays claim to man in the totality of his being; which declares its own authority to be the source of all authority; which refuses to recognize the independence in their own sphere of religion, culture, education and the family; which seeks to impose on all its citizens a particular philosophy of life; and which sets out to create by all the agencies of public information and education a particular type of man in accordance with its own understanding of the meaning and end of man's existence.[3]

This theory has, of course, a hundred ramifications; we must here confine our attention to the relation of such a state to the world mission of the Christian Church.

In the first place—and it may be the most important consideration —the totalitarian state emphasizes nationality to the extent that its own interests are made the end of all its endeavor and the limit of its concern and responsibility. But cannot that be said of all national governments? Are they not all so engrossed in furthering their own aims and purposes that the idea of being interested in the welfare of other nations, except in so far as it is of advantage to themselves, rarely emerges? Unfortunately, this is more or less true. Has any nation yet arisen which has been willing to make a serious sacrifice for the sake of another? There are those who say that such a state has never existed and never will. Emil Brunner has gone to the limit of declaring that "a Christian state is a sheer impossibility." Leaving that question aside as not coming within the scope of our inquiry, we still must ask: What is the difference between the ordinary state we are familiar with in the Western world and a totalitarian state? We shall see that there are real differences both within the state itself and in its relations with other nations and peoples.

Within the state of the type we are familiar with, the state does not attempt to dominate the life of the people in all is relations. There is freedom of religion, of education, of the press, of assembly; there is

[2] *Church, Community and State*, p. 7.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 9 f.

the right of individual initiative in business and in every sort of organization; in other words, the individual citizen has rights which the state is bound to respect and protect. The state recognizes more or less clearly other loyalties and relations in which its citizens should have freedom of action, provided, of course, that the rights of other citizens are respected and that no treasonous aims are involved which are calculated to destroy the state itself. It is also tacitly recognized that a citizen may even have one loyalty which is superior to that which he owes the state—loyalty to the Supreme Being and to his conscience. While such a recognition may not be written into the basic law of the land, it is nevertheless fundamental and not to be tampered with. The totalitarian state, on the other hand, denies all this. It must exercise control over the entire life of its people, with no segment of life exempt; it will brook no authority which runs counter to its claims; it will not allow that there can be any loyalty even to God himself which is prior to loyalty to the state. Thus it places itself in a position of supreme authority. It really makes of itself a religion in that it claims implicit and complete obedience; more correctly, it is a pseudo-religion, for it furnishes men no object of adoration beyond man himself or what man has made. It is the most sinister enemy of true religion in the world today; it is secularism embodied in organized form as government and claiming all the devotion which any divine being has ever demanded of his votaries. Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi philosopher, asserts that "the ultimate antagonism in philosophy is that between the racial-national principle on the one hand, the individual-universalistic principle on the other."[4] Thus there is a wide chasm between the state as we have thought of it in the Western world and the totalitarian state as we find it today in Germany, Italy, and Japan.

When Christianity comes into contact with the totalitarian state, it finds itself unavoidably in opposition to the demands made upon it. Without freedom of conscience, belief, and worship, Christianity cannot continue to exist. These are the breath of its life; it lives on freedom and cannot function without it. Social Democracy in Germany

[4] Quoted in Bennett, *Christian Realism*, p. 59.

under Adolf Hitler would at times seem to indicate that its purpose is not to destroy religion, but the religion which it will tolerate must comply with the demands of the state and be subservient to it in every particular. This is quite apparent in Germany where Pastor Niemöller and his co-workers languish in concentration camps for the one reason that they will not acknowledge the supreme overlordship of the state in the matter of religion and individual conscience.

It is in Japan and wherever Japanese authority is exercised that the most serious problem has emerged in the actual conduct of missionary operations and in the lives of the Christian men and women. The full account of what is taking place and the reasons for this attitude of the Japanese government would take us far beyond the bounds of a single chapter.[5] A few statements, however, will serve to relate the situation as faced in Japan to the problem of missionary strategy. What are the principles involved in the relation of Christianity and the state in that country? The government has made loyalty to the Emperor, to his ancestors, and especially to Amaterasu-o-mi-kami, the Sun Goddess and ancestress of the unbroken line of emperors, the touchstone of loyalty to the empire. It requires the subjects of the empire to repair to Shinto shrines and do obeisance to the spirits of the imperial ancestors. This is the "shrine problem," which all Japanese Christians must constantly face. Up to the time of the declaration of war, December 7, 1941, the government had consistently declared that this act was a demonstration of patriotism and not in any true sense religious worship. What has taken place since then we have no means of knowing; but the attitude might be changed, and should that take place a most serious situation would be created. It would mean that a Christian Japanese must refuse to obey the imperial mandate or surrender the vitality of his Christian experiences. The situation in the Roman Empire when the early Christians were being persecuted was quite similar. The Christian believer was presented with the alternative of recognizing the emperor as an object of worship as well as political ruler, or being thrown to the lions. The issue became clear-cut: to obey men or to be loyal to God. Until the

[5] See chap. xii, sec. 5 above for a brief statement of nationalism and religion in Japan.

declaration of war, that issue in Japan had not been raised. Christians could agree with the government that their act was one justified in a patriotic citizen and did not compromise their Christian profession. This was the attitude taken by Toyohiko Kagawa and many other leaders.

But even with this understanding there was difficulty. The places where this act of obedience to the governmental demand was performed were Shinto shrines, where rites and ceremonies which are genuinely religious are regularly carried on. The obeisance before the ancestors of the imperial house has the flavor of ancestor worship, and one cannot avoid coming to the conclusion, or very close to it, that this is genuine religion thinly disguised as a patriotic exercise by governmental declaration. The making of a decision may not be forced upon Christians in Japan, but the possibility is so close at hand that it has given them and their friends elsewhere grave concern. Will they be called upon to make the choice between the worship of the One God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the worship of other divinities, thus running the danger of surrendering their Christian profession? For if the issue should be inescapably presented, it is a matter of the utmost moment. There can be no compromise for the true follower of Jesus Christ. No nation—to say nothing of its divine beings—has the right to claim the supreme devotion of a Christian. To accept such deities as divine and worthy of worship is to forsake the Christian faith. There is no conviction in which one can be more sure than that.

But Japan as a totalitarian state is asserting its authority in other ways. It has placed the organization of the churches under its authority and has used pressure to cause the various Protestant denominations to unite and form one organized body. We have good reason to believe that there was a strong union movement, particularly among the laymen, in the various churches and that this pressure from the inside would have resulted in definite action in due time. Dr. Charles W. Iglehart, who writes most carefully about these tendencies, both in the churches and in government circles, comes to the conclusion that it is "impossible to weigh the precise degree of spontaneity and of

coercion in it all."[6] The name of the new united church is "The Church of Christ in Japan,"[7] the Japanese leaders expressing deep satisfaction that the preposition is "in" and not "of." They believe this gives evidence of their purpose to consider their church a part of the ecumenical church of Jesus Christ, the part located in Japan. The creed of this new body is very brief. It is "a vigorous asseveration of the main tenets of historic Christianity" and serves to calm the fears of those who believed that governmental pressure would make it necessary to "denature Christianity of many of its universal and absolute elements."[8]

It is evident that the government means to exercise control over the new church. How for this will be carried it is impossible to say. The church has felt it must comply with the demands which have been handed down by the authorities. We can easily imagine that the point might be reached when Christianity in Japan will be forced to make a momentous decision. Its freedom is already to a considerable degree compromised; what is the point beyond which it might be so far lost that the church must refuse to obey Caesar rather than God? Christianity might then be driven into the catacombs; it might have martyrs; but it must save its soul or forfeit the name of Christian. Great patience must be exercised toward the Christians in Japan by their fellow Christians in other lands; hasty judgments might be unfair. We must have confidence in the devotion of our fellow believers in that country. Especially is this true in a time of war. We must realize that they are in agreement with us in understanding the basic conviction on which our faith rests, that our religion is and can only be an exclusive religion; it has a fundamental rigidity which has kept it true to its primary loyalty to Jesus Christ, and to compromise here is to surrender all.

The situation in Korea is even more tense. This is caused by the fact that the political situation is different and more difficult. Korean

[6] See his long article on "The Japanese Christian Movement in Crisis" in *The Japan Christian Year Book* for 1941. This is the last authoritative word we have on the religious situation in Japan before war was declared at the close of that year.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Christians find themselves living in a country which has been forcibly annexed to Japan and which the Japanese government is attempting to make completely Japanese in spirit and purpose. The Korean church is being compelled to adopt policies in line with Japanese aims, to accept the program of Japan for a new order in the Far East, and to repudiate all ideas which are at variance with the current creed of Japanese nationalism. Not only Communism, which is so deeply feared and hated by the Japanese authorities, but freedom, democracy, and peace are to be repudiated both in public speech and in private thinking. All that the church plans must have the approval of the Japanese overlords. The question arises, can such an attitude exist in a true church of Jesus Christ? Can it continue to be a church of the living God when public meetings, organization, and the private conscience of individuals are rigidly under the surveillance of the police authorities? All this was true before the war broke—we are ignorant of what has taken place since that fateful day. Again the counsel must be for patience and understanding, but again there must be full realization that for the continuance of Christianity the notes of true religion cannot long be surrendered without disastrous results.

We have been considering the effects of the policies of a totalitarian state within the bounds of the state itself. We must now turn to its relations with the family of nations. And the first striking fact is that it does not recognize the nations as constituing a family. There is an extreme narrowness in the attitude of such a state; its own interests must be given exclusive attention with no consideration of the rights of others. Treaties and agreements may be made but not on the basis of true common interest. There is only one object in mind —the good of the state and of itself alone. Agreements reached may be repudiated or otherwise terminated as soon as selfish interest so indicates. This attitude has shown itself in all the totalitarian states of the world. Anti-Semitism in Germany and the repudiation of everyone and everything that is not German or "Aryan" result in brutal treatment, not only of the Jew, but of the inhabitants in all the countries conquered and overrun by Hitler's armies. The same attitude has shown itself in Japan. The church must be distinctively a

Japanese church; it must foster the program of the authorities in China; it must sever its connections with the mother churches in the Western world, including the dismissing of European or American leaders and refusing funds furnished by Christians in Western lands to support institutions such as hospitals and schools. The sense of brotherhood, of belonging to a world-wide fellowship, is anathema to the narrow nationalism of the kind of state we are describing. Humanity is to be blotted out of the thinking of the true German or Japanese. "Blood" and "race" and "nation" are the words to conjure with and not "community" and "fellowship" in Christ.

We must realize very clearly what is taking place. The exclusive nationalism of the totalitarian state would destroy one of the essential notes of Christianity, that of universality. Love is a word which has lost caste in communities which are being taught that loyalty is to be confined to one's own people and nation and land. Brotherhood is justified only so long as it does not take into its circle the men of another race or nation. Christianity, of course, is the exact opposite of this. It includes among its essential notes that of love of all God's children wherever they are to be found, a brotherhood binding in one unbroken fellowship all men of every race who share in the common loyalty and devotion. Thus it appears that when we contend today for the Christian faith we are at the same time contending for the world mission of Christianity, and vice versa. There has never been a time in the history of Christianity when this has been true as it is today. The note in Christianity which is distinctively missionary is that of universality, which is being challenged in every totalitarian state. Were it to be given up, Christianity would be so distorted that it could not be called Christian. Interesting to say, there is a movement among Germans which aims to go back to the old gods of their Teutonic ancestors, Woden and Thor—tribal deities to whom no one offered worship in the days of their prime save the Germans themselves. It may not in the end amount to very much, but it is symptomatic of the inevitable tendency in a state as narrowly racial and nationalistic as Germany is at the present time.

The same ingrowing tendency is apparent in Japan. It is significant that the cult which is being promoted by the national leaders is

an ancient nature worship, born in the Japanese mind, known only by Japanese, and unfitted to the life and thought of any other people. The religion which both these nationalisms would like to drive out is Christianity, the only religion which offers stubborn opposition to the narrowing policies of their rulers. It is a contest between essential Christianity and an attenuated religion bereft of its universal claim and appeal, which will fit itself into the Procrustean bed of bigoted arrogance and blind self-interest. There can be no quarter given when such antagonists meet. In the end one must give way and the other prevail. There is danger in a period like the one in which we live that governments that normally have little or none of the totalitarian spirit will be drawn into the vortex and to a greater or less extent become totalitarian. Let us remind ourselves when we face such tendencies in any Western land that the purity and even the existence of our religion are at stake. A narrow racial or nationalistic religion is not a religion worthy of mankind and must in the end be shoved aside and give place to a religion which is world-embracing. We contend then in a war-torn world for Christianity and for its world vision. We are able to discern more clearly than ever before that one is involved in the other. We know instinctively that we cannot have a world mission without the Christianity out of which it has arisen and which it is commissioned to propagate. We are forced to realize also that we cannot have a Christianity which is worthy of the name without a world mission, which is the agency through which it expresses most significantly its note of universality.

We may now ask the important question which is involved in all that has been said. What has the Church of Christ a right to expect of a government with respect to the Christian mission? The question must be the same whether the state is entirely neutral to religion or favors one form of religion which is under its special protection. If Christianity is to do its typical work among any people there should be no prohibition of the mission which it plans to undertake. But beyond this general statement there are three things which are essential to the conduct of the Christian mission. First must be the right to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience—in other words, freedom of worship. Second, the mission should possess

the right to educate children in the Christian way of life and train leaders for its enlarging task. Christianity is so essentially bound up with an intelligent appreciation of its meaning and purpose that it must teach and train its members, or in the end fade out of the life of a people. The third right is that of proclaiming the Christian message freely and in every place. These are minimum requirements, but they are inclusive. Without all of them it is not possible to promote the Christian mission with hope of lasting results.[9]

The history of the missionary enterprise is a verification of the necessity of these three rights or privileges. They have not always been granted. In many places there has been persistent opposition and at times bloody persecution. Even at the present day there is opposition so strenuous in a few countries that no mission can be undertaken. No Christian missionary as such has gone beyond the Khyber Pass in northwest India into Afghanistan. Missionaries are not yet permitted in Tibet, and only a few intrepid spirits have ventured to plant the cross within the borders of that intolerant Buddhist land. Islam offers unrelenting opposition to the Christian mission, and even in Turkey, where devoted men and women have been at work for more than a century, the only approach to the Moslem population is through the school. Until the day comes when it will not be personally dangerous for a Moslem in Turkey to announce his adherence to Christianity, education will probably be the only avenue to the minds and hearts of the people. We must hold in high honor the missionaries who through the decades have sown their seed and have realized no harvest. The day must come when the barriers will be removed and men and women may be allowed freely to accept the religion of their choice even though it be the despised religion of the cross.

We may look at the problem from still another angle. Hugh Vernon White holds that there are three "basic conditions" required for the attainment of the Christian goal: *"intellectual liberty, democracy,* and *government by law."* [10] We are separated by a long distance from those requirements in the world today, but even so the world mission

[9] See Phillips, *The Gospel in the World,* p. 215.
[10] *A Working Faith for the World,* p. 199.

functions almost everywhere. In fact, in many countries the mission itself is compelled to generate the conditions for its own growth. This, of course, holds up the progress of evangelization and Christianization; but it is the only way to make any progress at all, and so it is patiently accepted. Accepting conditions as they exist but never satisfied until they are improved, the missionary movement has still been able to function as a religious and cultural force. It has brought in a new day in many lands, and is capable of doing so again. We do not know the conditions which will be faced when the war comes to an end. With the conviction that without the Christian gospel and the way of Jesus as the foundation on which a new world order is to be built all that we hope for will be lost, the missionary forces are girding themselves anew to enter every door and present the claims of Jesus Christ as far as the vision and the generosity of the church at the home base will permit them to do so.

Chapter XVII

CHRISTIANITY AND INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Our religion has been carried to almost all the nations of the world; what relation has it established with the cultures of these lands? A religion cannot stand aloof from the life of the people among whom it is proclaiming its gospel and remain unrelated to the various features of their culture. It is now coming to be accepted among missionary leaders that Christianity must become indigenous: that is, it must share in the life of the country in which it is propagated and really be at home in it. As Mr. Kagawa, the Japanese Christian leader, put it, "We want Jesus Christ to take out his first and second naturalization papers in Japan." [1]

As a special problem for the missionary administrator the relation of Christianity to indigenous cultures has emerged in comparatively recent years. For most of the nineteenth century the missionary enterprise was in the stage of securing lodgment by establishing little groups of Christian disciples and organizing them into churches. Thus they might be able through the fellowship to stand firm and preserve the integrity of their Christian profession in the midst of an alien environment. It could scarcely have occurred either to the missionary or to his dearly bought converts that some of the social customs of the life they had left behind as evil had good in them which might form a part of their life in its new relationships. Theirs was frequently the stern task of maintaining a real Christian experience in a culture which seemed to them antagonistic to all they were learning to hold dear. It was an antagonism which frequently included social ostracism and at times physical suffering and even martrydom. Only when these little groups became churches which could stand on their own feet and had developed a leadership capable of surveying the whole situation, did the problem of their relations to the society around them

[1] Quoted in White, *A Theology for Christian Missions*, p. 43.

assume an importance which now grows more significant as the years pass.

This has been due not only to their own increase but to the tremendous growth, especially in eastern and southern Asia, of the spirit of independent nationality, which is now abroad everywhere in the world. The effect of this rising consciousness of worth on religious thought and practice indicates how close is the relation of culture to religion and how impossible it is to escape a consideration of the nature of the relation and the principles on which it is based. The extent and importance of the effective contact of the two can be both overestimated and underestimated. How far is religious life determined by the culture of the land where it exists? Is it a phase of that culture to such a degree that it might be said to have little or no independence of its own? Is it impossible for a religion to break away from bondage to its culture and perform a task which belongs to it alone? There are those who believe it cannot be done. "Troeltsch and others like him hold that historical Christianity and the other great religions are each the flowering of its own distinctive culture and consequently it is as futile to try to transplant Christianity into Hindu or Confucian soil as it would be to grow a rosebud on a geranium plant." [2]

This is not exactly the view of Professor Baker himself, though he develops a philosophy of Christian missions on a foundation not far removed from that of Troeltsch. His fundamental thesis is that "religion is a phase of cultural development, and missions one aspect of a more general process of cultural interpenetration." [3] He goes further: "Religion is but one of the products of a much larger and more complex process, in which certain fundamental human urges and interests are seeking an outlet, now through daily occupations and family life, now through politics, art or religion, each of which acts in a reciprocal way upon the others as they develop together, like so many sisters in a family." [4] Another statement brings out his thought even more clearly: "It is the general culture of society and the daily

[2] Baker, *Christian Missions and a World Culture*, p. 26.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

experiences of people which have given rise to the various types of human need, and to the behavior patterns and thought patterns of religion through which these needs have been met." [5] What we have here, then, is a secular view of religious development in general and of Christianity in particular. Religion is the expression of features of the surrounding culture and is determined by it. There is little or no thought that there is a revelation from above which becomes a gospel, a message from the eternal God, and not a matter of human evolution.

No wonder this conception of missions does not necessarily involve the proclamation of a message from above. It has quite a different approach: this view contemplates an interchange of cultures, each religion and its culture making its contribution to a new synthesis which shall express better the new urges and aspirations of the people and lead them on to further development. None of the religions entering into this new relation "can claim absolute finality or infallibility. Each religion—theistic, pantheistic, polytheistic, monistic or pluralistic—may be described as experimenting in its own peculiar manner with the problems of life." [6] It can be easily surmised that according to this view there is no uniqueness in the Christian religion, that is, in the sense of its being unparalleled and superior. It is suggested that we are "rather transmitting to the rest of the world the idealized and spiritualized aspects of our Western culture." [7] The question arises whether God is a reality in this process or not. It would seem rather that the "philosophy of the creative process" is actually the religion on which this theory is built and that "God" and "Jesus Christ" are but symbols or idealizations of the values which are brought forth by the creative process of cross-fertilization of cultures. Regarding these symbols, we are told that "others prefer to take the more general concept, God, rather than the idealized historical figure of Jesus Christ, as the center of reference about which their lives are focussed. This is interpreted in the light of scrutinized experience, scientific and otherwise, and proclaimed to the rest of the world." [8] And finally, the

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 292.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. ix.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 307.

symbols are not as important as the values which they symbolize. So we come to this conclusion: "Therefore so long as human lives are actually being enriched by these values and by this sense of reality, the specific auspices under which this is accomplished—Christian, non-Christian or scientific—are matters of secondary importance." [9]

Professor Baker in the course of his argument has given a splendid analysis of the processes which are going on in the assimilation of the new cultural patterns by peoples which have been awakened and are attempting to fit themselves to meet the new conditions presented to them by the contact of East and West. He has many helpful things to say, and yet as a whole his outlook is vitiated by the subordination of religion to culture. His attitude results in weakening the religious impulse and in taking away from it the power of initiative and the independence it has always shown when it has been able to accomplish its typical task as a revolutionary force in the world. By making Christian missions a part of the sociological process and by surrendering the conviction that Christianity is primarily and essentially a revelation from the only God, this author has made it a comparatively weak thing which could never have accomplished what it has and which contains no promise that it can go out into the chaotic world in which we now live with a compelling message that will challenge the minds and hearts of men.

While as a problem which must be deliberately faced the relation of Christianity and indigenous cultures has only recently been projected into the missionary consciousness, the problem itself has ever been with the missionary movement. Our religion found itself in an alien environment in its task of carrying the gospel to the Roman Empire. It used Greek thought as the vehicle of its theology, and its organization partook largely of the forms and the ideas of the Roman government. There was danger in the process, and undoubtedly Christianity suffered. It assimilated ideas and practices which have had a retarding effect upon its life. But it must never be forgotten that it always opposed sexual laxity, the inhuman practices of the arena, and other abuses; it made possible a life never before known among the peoples

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 308.

of the empire. And this was done against the most stubborn opposition and the most cruel persecutions which the authorities could devise. Yes, it came to terms with surrounding culture at many points, but the culture came to terms with Christianity as well. It required an independent spirit to break in and hold its own against every kind of pressure from the environment. Christianity can change a culture only by being independent of it, and by a deep conviction that it possesses a message which has right of way no matter what obstacles present themselves.

During the Middle Ages the situation was quite different. The Christian mission found itself in contact with barbarians, and not with an ordered society as in the previous period. Again it took on features which were contributed by the culture of the people among whom it worked, but here again it effected a transformation which was both religious and cultural. It should be remembered that the motive and the dynamic were religious and that the culture followed in the train of religious accomplishment. This is being repeated today in Africa and in other areas where animistic savages are being reached by Christianity. The motive and the dynamic are again religious, but the outcome includes social transformation as well. It was David Livingstone, in the middle of the nineteenth century, who had the insight to discern that no permanent results religiously could be achieved among the tribes of south central Africa unless a new social life were introduced and new outlets for trade were opened up for the exchange of products. He saw clearly, though he might not have used the same terms, that religion and culture were closely connected; but for him the primacy of religion was the foundation stone of his thinking. So it has been in the missionary movement wherever a savage tribe has been tamed and Christianized and set on its course of development towards a new life.

This does not mean that very much has not had to be learned by the missionary in recent decades about his own task. Much adverse criticism has been leveled against the missionary who has gone to peoples of backward culture. This has come from trained anthropologists, who have discovered that tribes which have been won from

savagery and have been turned toward Christianity have not made the advance which had been expected of them. In fact, it has been pointed out that after a certain point there has been positive deterioration. These people have been separated from their old indigenous culture, their old customs and habits; and the new life has not proved satisfying. It is in some cases so alien to their desires and their ways of thinking that it could not be assimilated and made their own. And when this has occurred there has always been the danger of relapse into their old customs and ways of life, or, what is even worse, into the chaos of utter confusion. It is like the condition described by Jesus of the man out of whom the unclean spirit had been exorcised and whose house was now "swept and garnished." But he could not abide the emptiness of his unoccupied house, so he "taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; . . . . and the last state of that man becometh worse that the first." [10] An adequate new culture must be provided which is more satisfying than the first, or there is a relapse—and that is worse than the original condition.

The criticism was often too severe and unsympathetic, but the fact is, the missionary among savage tribes had many things to learn. There was much in the old life which was bad, and when it was not all evil it was so mixed with degrading features that the missionary turned away from it in horror. The interesting thing is that the convert often reacted even more strongly, if that were possible, against his old life than the missionary himself. The result was that there were features of the old that were discarded which were not inherently evil but had possibilities of good. This is not strong enough. There were practices which so fitted in with the best thought of the savage and so expressed for him the essential fitness of things that to be deprived of this expression was like cutting off an arm or a leg. Reference must be made particularly to the initiatory rites into manhood and womanhood practiced widely among savage peoples. They were a compound of wholesome and valuable admonition and direction and of what was degrading and impure. The missionary saw the nasty and failed to realize that underneath the ritual and the rites was a

[10] Luke 11:24-26.

valuable idea—that of initiating young people into adult life and teaching the lore and customs of the tribe in a formal and impressive manner. This is not yet seen by many missionaries, but there are those who have taken advantage of this basal impulse or tendency in the life of the people and are using it in connection with admission into the Christian Church. Purged of its unfortunate features and filled with a new and uplifting meaning, they have been led to feel that it answers to a fundamental need of their people and that it may be a contribution of great value in the developing life of the community as it starts on its way to a new life and a new culture.[11]

This is only one illustration, though a significant one, of the manner in which the old and the new in culture can be united in the forming of a new life. It is well to have the anthropologist offer his criticism. The fact is that the missionary himself is turning anthropologist and is able to diagnose the situation and prescribe the remedies in a situation which is at the same time religious, economic, and social. And when all has been said on every side of this pressing and difficult question, one thing stands out clear and distinct. Were it not for the missionary and his religious impulse and passion, there would be no problem at all. There is no other agency in the world which has the motive and the dynamic and the message to go to a degraded people and attempt to lift them to a higher level and put them on their way towards noble living, at peace with themselves and their neighbors. Against this background of uplifting service in the name of Christ may be set the impact of our industrial civilization upon these primitive people. It is one long story of callous exploitation and demoralization. Even where a people have begun to advance out of their savagery under the guidance of devoted missionary leaders, it is not unknown that the work has been ruined almost beyond repair by the heartless approach of the trader and industrialist who cares for one thing only, his own gain, with no consideration for the future of the people or their development in civilized ways of living.

The problem is quite different and yet equally pressing when Christianity is carried to a people who already possess an advanced culture.

[11] See an illuminating article entitled "Towards Understanding" by N. Langford Smith in *The International Review of Missions*, for july, 1942.

And here several general statements must be made at once. Hugh Vernon White says, "Christianity has never been fully at home in any human society."[12] There has always been a tension between the ideals of Christianity and the aims of society as a whole. Sometimes under relatively ideal conditions it is scarcely felt, but today it would be difficult to find any locality where there is not a strained relation when the ideals of Christianity and the purposes and methods of society expressing themselves in the state or in economic organization come into contact. There is at least tension, and often there is open opposition and conflict. The problem of peace and war may be used as an illustration. For doing no more than distributing leaflets announcing the Day of Prayer and expressing the hope of peace between the nations, twelve or more missionary women in Korea were arrested and sent to prison. We are reminded of the admonition of the Apostle Paul, "Be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."[13] It was Jesus who declared, "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."[14] These words come out of an age long since gone, and yet they have an application as relevant as when they were first uttered. Culture and religion, the Christian religion especially, are never in complete harmony. The Christian must be seeking his direction and inspiration from above. He is a citizen of the world and must partake of its life and the fellowship which it provides, but he has a higher citizenship which claims his deepest allegiance and without that he loses his hold on what is highest and actually becomes a poorer citizen in the state of which he forms a part.

There was a day when the superiority of the civilization of the West was considered so evident that a missionary thought of himself as an emissary, primarily of his religion, but also of the culture of his homeland. The people of the country to which he went seemed eager not only for the religion he brought but also for the culture which he represented. Among savage tribes that is to a considerable extent

[12] *A Theology for Christian Missions*, p. 52.
[13] Rom. 12:2.
[14] John 16:33.

true still. But it is far different in lands with an ancient culture like Japan, Korea, China, and India. There has been in all these countries a revaluation of their past, and the result has been a resurgence of pride and appreciation of what is their own, of what has been developed out of their own life and thus represents their own genius and outlook. This is as it should be. The most valid criticism of Christianity in these countries today is that it is a foreign religion and does not fit into the picture naturally as a part of their life and culture. There is no greater need than that of overcoming this foreignness and becoming naturalized. We must not hold the missionary alone responsible for this attitude. It was inevitable that when Christian missionaries carried the gospel they carried much of their own culture with it. Christianity embodies itself in the life of a people and becomes a part of every feature in it. This increases more and more as the centuries pass, until Christianity in one country is different from that in another. As a religion it may be the same fundamentally, the manifestation of the same gospel and way of life; but as one people differ from another, so in a thousand ways Christianity takes on these differing features and becomes indigenous.

At the present time indigenization is a most pressing matter. Just as there is a British, a German, and an American type of Christianity, so there is a demand that the Christianity of Japan be distinctively Japanese—and so of all the great areas of Christian advance. We cannot expect that the form of organization, the statement of belief, the type of ritual expression and other features shall remain just the same in these countries as Christianity makes progress through the passing decades. The Indian type of mind, more philosophical and not taking kindly to close organization, must express itself in its own way, or else the new religion will continue to seem foreign and cannot expect to be a permanent part of India's life. A religion must express itself according to the genius of the life of a people, or be an exotic.

The writer has before him a beautiful picture of Christ in Gethsemane. A glance is all that is needed to identify it. But the same glance will also disclose its Chinese origin and character. The mountains are not the "mountains round about Jerusalem" but betray the

scenery of well-known Chinese art prints. The Master and the sleeping disciples wear the dress of the Chinese literati. In fact, it is Chinese in every feature, but at the same time thoroughly Christian. So it must be in every department of life. Our religion must come to express the religious aspirations of other peoples as completely as it does ours. A Gothic cathedral seems to be a part of the natural setting in England or France but may look incongruous in Burma or Korea or an African village. The architecture of the Far East and India is quite as well fitted to be the expression of Christian symbolism as that of Europe. So it is with thought forms and customs and the delightful little ways in which a people take joy in expressing their peculiar bent of mind and also in showing reverence for what they deem holy and sacred. It is almost a duty for one who would be acquainted with what is being done in giving a unique national expression to the Christian spirit, to study the splendidly illustrated volumes which have been compiled by Professor Daniel J. Fleming. Their very names indicate clearly their content and purpose.[15]

The contrast between what has been the attitude in the past and what is now developing is to be seen in the answer of an Indian Christian woman, who was asked what she was religiously. Her reply was, "I am an American Dutch Reformed Christian"! That was not many decades ago, and it seemed perfectly natural to her then, but fortunately such an answer would be impossible now. Her answer would undoubtedly be, "I am an Indian Christian," and we would respect her the more for her patriotism. Let it not be thought that the process of assimilation is an easy task. For example, how far can the reverential attitudes which are appropriate in ancestor worship be assimilated to the Christian attitude toward our departed loved ones? This is only one of many tantalizing questions which emerge. They cannot all be answered at once. It is a long process and one which must be worked out by each people for themselves. The one thing of supreme importance is to be sure that the Christian gospel is produc-

[15] *Heritage of Beauty*, Pictorial Studies of Modern Christian Architecture in Asia and Africa Illustrating the Influence of Indigenous Cultures; *Each with His Own Brush*, Contemporary Christian Art in Asia and Africa; *Christian Symbols in a World Community.*

ing its characteristic product in experience and fellowship. When that is being done the Christians in each country—not the missionary from the outside—must determine for themselves the forms which their religious life must take. In the end, what we may expect, judging by what has taken place in the past, is that the same religion will be found in every land, but with differences which make it a joy to have fellowship with men and women who gladly give their heart's devotion to a common Lord and yet show diverse ways in which that devotion and loyalty are expressed.

Chapter XVIII

MISSIONS AND THE ECUMENICAL CHURCH

We may not be able to go the entire distance with those who identify Christianity with the Christian Church, but it would be impossible to imagine Christianity without the church. From the very beginning of the expansion of Christianity churches were founded in every place. Beginning with the disciples in the Upper Room in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, Christian groups were formed into church fellowships wherever the apostles went with the gospel. In its essence the idea of the church is very simple—"where two or three are gathered together in my name," there is the church, for "there am I in the midst of them."[1] The presence of Jesus Christ is the most distinctive note of a true church. All else is an elaboration of this simple but overwhelming fact. There are great differences in the conception of the church among Christians, but in the end this is the final criterion: Can a body of men and women who claim to be a church give valid evidence of the presence of Jesus Christ as a vital power in their life and purpose?

It is difficult to determine exactly when the church really began. Are its beginnings to be found back in the Old Testament period, and can we agree with Charles Clayton Morrison that the continuing community of the church has come down from the earliest times when God's purpose could be discerned in the history of the chosen people of Israel?[2] Did it have its beginning when Peter made his confession that Jesus was the Christ and the Master declared that Peter was the Rock on which the church would be built?[3] Or was it founded on the Day of Pentecost when all in the Upper Room were "filled with the Holy Spirit"?[4] Or again, as in the view of the Greek Orthodox Church, is not the church in reality uncreated; is it not eternal; and

[1] Matt. 18:20.
[2] See *passim* in *What Is Christianity?*
[3] Matt. 16:16-19.
[4] Acts 2:1-4.

has it not always been in existence, though made manifest openly to men when Jesus departed and his living presence in the Spirit took the place of his physical presence?[5] It would be helpful were it possible to reach unity at this point, but it is not of the highest importance. What is of supreme importance is to determine the essential nature of the church and the source of its life. The conception that the church is a man-made affair, that it came into being and lived on because men felt the need of it and voluntarily decided to band themselves together for certain purposes which they considered salutory and helpful, does not in any sense do justice to the true meaning of what is involved. This does not mean that the voluntary principle is not important in the conception of the church, but it does mean that the church is far more than a human organization in origin and essence. This is the one organization among men which did not originate with man, nor is its future essentially dependent on man. It is the Church of Jesus Christ, his in origin, purposes, and sustaining power. This conception of the church is in need of emphasis, especially among those Protestants who, reacting against the claims of Rome, have sometimes swung so far to the other extreme that the church seems to them to be a purely voluntary organization, of as much significance and concern to them as to God. They have at times almost forgotten that it is "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."[6] The lesson is being learned rapidly by even the most loosely organized denominations today that the church is not theirs but in its deepest meaning belongs to God and is cherished by him as the apple of his eye. The church is "the body of Christ,"[7] bought by him at a great price and sustained by him through the Holy Spirit, which is constantly present wherever the true church is to be found.

Beyond this important though general statement there are the greatest differences of opinion as to what the church is, who constitute its membership, and what rights it possesses. The theories which

[5] As was asserted by Father Sergius Boulgakoff at the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order in 1937.

[6] I Tim. 3:15.

[7] I Cor. 12:27.

are held range all the way from that of the Roman Catholic Church to that of the Society of Friends. For a Roman Catholic the church is the bearer of the blessings of God to men through its priesthood, which receives its ordination from bishops, who have themselves been ordained through all the Christian ages in unbroken succession from St. Peter himself, the first bishop of Rome, declared by Jesus Christ to be the Rock on which the church was to be built. Thus by tactual succession the divine grace has been transmitted from the earliest day to the present. The importance of this conviction for the individual believer lies in the fact that the divine grace which is essential to living the Christian life is conveyed through the sacraments; and the sacraments are not valid unless administered by the priesthood, which possesses that power through belonging to the "apostolic succession" through ordination. It is a watertight system—*non salus extra ecclesia* ("no salvation outside the church"). From this extreme view through various degrees of difference the other theories range until the Quaker is reached, who has no formal sacraments and who consequently is not saved at all according to the rigid theory of the Roman Catholic—and the Eastern Orthodox as well. The Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States include clergymen and lay members who hold differing convictions, varying all the way from something like the extreme position of Rome to the far more moderate view of the Low-churchman, who believes in the succession theory but does not feel that it involves the consequences which his High-Church brother feels bound to assert.

With all that has been accomplished through friendly conferences—such as Lausanne, 1927, and Edinburgh, 1937—there is no prospect that those representing the extreme views will be able to have Christian fellowship at the table of our Lord in the near future. The Roman Catholic Church felt itself unable to send official representatives to the conferences, though there were unofficial onlookers present. The Eastern Orthodox representatives were most friendly and entered the service of prayer and praise with the same cordial spirit as the others. But when it comes to formal churchmanship, these churches are bound by the same rigid adherence to their exclusive privileges as their Roman Catholic brethren. Their very presence,

however, with representatives of other churches and their recognition of them as Christian brethren gives promise of closer relation in the future.

Now all these diverse kinds of churchmanship have been carried into the mission field and are in operation there. It is with the situation there that our concern lies, and our consideration must go back to quite elementary questions. One of these has to do with the existence and organization of the church in every mission land. As far back as 1851 Dr. Henry Venn, secretary of the Church Missionary Society of England, made the declaration that the purpose of missions must be to build up churches which would be "self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating." This was another way of saying that the church in every land should become indigenous. It implies more than is often seen to be involved in the statement of Dr. Venn. For to be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating, a church must take on such features as shall make it a fitting expression of the life of a people and make it possible to grow and develop as an indigenous church. What does that mean? This is clearly beyond the knowledge of living men and women. A new process has been at work within the last two decades to which the awkward word "devolution" has been attached. It means that the control of the church and its activities in mission lands shall gradually pass out of the hands of "foreigners," which the missionaries are, into the hands of natives of these countries, or "nationals," as they are now usually called. The responsibilities of the church are to devolve or be transferred from one set of leaders and workers to another.

Devolution, of course, is a gradual process and can be applied in some countries very much sooner than in others. It has actually arrived in Japan, to use but one illustration. There the natural course of the transfer has been speeded up by the government, which has taken the drastic step of making it impossible for those coming from other countries to hold positions of authority in the church and for the church to receive funds from the sending countries. What the end of this policy will be, no one can forsee. The Japanese church has expressed its desire that missionaries should not permanently be with-

drawn, but no one can tell what the conditions will be when peace comes again. At the other extreme are peoples in various lands who are so backward and show so little initiative and have produced so few leaders that the process of devolution cannot begin for a long time in the future. They are backward races, which so far as can be seen now must remain under the tutelage of missionaries for years to come.

But in most countries what is now being forced upon the churches in Japan will take place spontaneously with greater or less rapidity. In fact, this is just what we should expect. It is not incorrect to say that foreign missions exist to make themselves unnecessary, and that as soon as possible. What kind of church may we look for in these lands? The Roman Church has a ready answer: It will be just like the church in every other country. There is but one pattern, and to that the church in every land must conform. Let us discover and emphasize the truth contained in this theory. If there is to be a truly ecumenical church, one that is world-wide and exhibits in every land the essential notes of a Christian Church, there cannot but be a certain family likeness, a sameness which will make representatives of all these churches recognize each other as brothers in Christ, having the fellowship of the Spirit, and able to work out a common program for the furtherance of the gospel and the building up of the church. But how far must it be carried? Does it mean that there will be an identical creed, a common ritual, and the same form of organization? Must there be conformity to a standard which would determine the conduct of church life even down to the lesser details? It would seem to be more reasonable to think that the church in any country will make its own decisions as to its creed, ritual, organization, and program. Such has been the case among the denominations in the United States, whose ecclesiastical organizations are independent of those of the mother churches in Great Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia. Differing organizations and distinctiveness in life and customs may go together with essential unity in loyalty to a common Lord and in fellowship as his followers.

This brings us to the difficult and important question of church unity. We must realize that it is on the mission field that the problem is most keenly felt. The reasons for this are quite apparent. The

divisions of the church which may have had historical meaning in the home lands lose that meaning when carried abroad. They arose in most cases out of historical circumstances which have no significance in other countries. The divisions which were caused in a number of denominations in the United States by different attitudes toward slavery are incomprehensible when carried into Japan and China. But more than this, these divisions do irreparable harm in the mission field by creating the impression that Christianity is not one but many and that the injunction of the Master that all his people should be one has not been taken seriously. People are led to feel that Christians are hopelessly torn asunder. It has resulted in overlapping and in unseemly rivalry, which not only are expensive but create a most unfavorable impression concerning the entire enterprise. So serious are these handicaps that everywhere in mission lands there is a fervent desire that these divisions may be healed and that the Church of Jesus Christ may be one.

No wonder, then, that the world conferences on faith and order should have had their inception in the mind of a missionary and at a missionary conference. It was during the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 that Bishop Charles Henry Brent, a missionary in the Philippine Islands, caught the vision of a world conference where questions of faith and order should be frankly discussed by representatives of all the churches. The results of this movement are beyond tabulation. The most remarkable fact is that the two conferences, at Lausanne in 1927, and Edingurgh in 1937, could be held at all. No more striking testimony of the reality of an ecumenical church could be offered than the gathering together of these delegates. The Roman Church was the only major body which could not see its way to be represented. The only unity it can envisage is the unity of complete absorption, based on submission to the pope as the vice-regent of Jesus Christ. He must be acknowledged as possessing the right to rule all followers of Christ everywhere. But the Eastern Orthodox churches were represented; so were the Anglican churches of England and the Dominions and colonies, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, all the great Protestant bodies, and many of the smaller communions. All were together on an

equal basis, and all were equally intent on emphasizing their loyalty to Christ and their sense of oneness with all others who are his followers. In the final declaration of belief at Edinburgh a unanimity was achieved which came as a surprise to many, who did not realize how close Christians are to one another though separated by denominational barriers. The most serious bar to complete unity was the doctrine of the church and the sacraments, but even that was not able to dampen the devotional glow of the common worship to which the entire body gave itself each day or to prevent the fellowship of those having a common Christian experience, which created a sense of oneness that could not be broken.

While the need for unity is felt so keenly on the mission field, the problem is one which is occupying the attention of the church at the home base as much as abroad. Unity can scarcely be achieved in a mission land without a corresponding movement at home, and vice versa; so we must all be working together with the same purpose in view. There are serious difficulties in the way, but the one sin against the spirit of unity to which we dare not give way is to acquiesce in the present situation with its unhappy divisions. We may not be able to see how it is to be achieved; we may at times almost despair of breaking through the barriers which now stand between us and the unity of God's people; but we cannot give up hope nor cease to do all in our power, individually and as churches, to clear away misunderstanding, hold fellowship together, and believe that it is God's will that his people shall be one. All our churches are but parts of the one Church of Jesus Christ; we are all brethern together; we are all essentially one in him now, and nothing must prevent us from traveling the road which leads to the full realization that what we are in essential fact shall become evident in visible and outward manifestation.

How much advance has been made, and what are the prospects as we face the future? We have great cause for thanksgiving, and at the same time we have reason for deep concern. There is little to be gained by evading facts, whether pleasant or otherwise. Probably the greatest advance has been in the growth of the conviction that the present condition is contrary to the will of God, and that we must find a way

out. This is incalculable gain. There has also been a clarification of issues and of the nature of the problems which must be faced. No one anywhere, save possibly in the Roman Church, believes that the solution of our difficulties lies in uniformity. Diversity in unity is accepted almost universally today. Even in the Roman Church there is much diversity and flexibility, but not at points which the leaders in the movement toward unity in all the other churches believe are deeply significant. It is also very clear that unity cannot be achieved by reducing our beliefs to some common denominator to which all shall conform. This would be achieved at dreadful cost. No one can be expected to surrender convictions which he looks upon as vital to Christian experience and life. When unity comes it must be inclusive and not exclusive. We are not looking for a minimum but for a maximum of Christian content in the church that is to be. Our life must express all that Christian men and women have bled and died for through the Christian ages; all must be included which has gone into the making of the Christian fellowship in the fullness which we find in every branch of the church. All of these principles become even more important when seen in the light of the growing life of the younger churches in mission lands. They must express their new life in Christ in their own way and yet be included in the unity of the Christian fellowship, which shall be sufficiently elastic and free to make diversity possible in the more inclusive unity.

The chief accomplishment in corporate unity in the present century has been the unification of denominations which belong to closely related families. We note the organic unification of Presbyterian churches in Scotland and of Methodist churches in England. The same kind of unification has more recently been achieved by three Methodist bodies in the United States, by Presbyterians with Cumberland Presbyterians, by Reformed and Christian bodies; and still others are in process. A further step was taken in the formation of the United Church of Canada, a union of Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches, in which all the Methodist and Congregational churches joined, but which includes only two-thirds of the Presbyterian churches. The effect of these unions was immediately felt in the mission field, where the churches which were children of the uniting

churches at home were automatically made parts of the new unions. This movement will doubtless continue. One of the effects of the present war must undoubtedly be a closer fellowship on the part of Christian people, and ultimately that must result in movements leading to unity.

No unification has as yet taken place between churches which hold to the doctrine of the "apostolic succession" and those which do not. The crux of the problem is at the point of the validity of the sacraments. Can there be unification between bodies, one of which believes that episcopal ordination by bishops in unbroken succession from the time of the original apostles is essential to provide for the validity of the sacraments, and the other of which does not? This barrier still stands in the way, and no solution has been found. Is reordination of those not previously episcopally ordained the only way out? If so, organic unity between churches differing at this point seems a long way off. We cannot doubt the depth and sincerity of conviction of the churchmen who believe that the very continuance of the church as a true Church of Christ is endangered should they allow men to administer the sacraments who have not received episcopal ordination. On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that men whose work has been blessed of God as ministers of the Word should be willing to admit that their ordination is invalid and submit to reordination. It would seem as if they were denying the very evident witness of the Spirit that their ministries and orders were valid and effective as instruments of the divine purpose. They belong to a spiritual succession which is as real as any other. How can this barrier be overcome? That is the question before the Presbyterian and Protestant Episcopal churches in this country as they come together to discuss the question of possible unification.

It is also the bar which for many years has stood in the way of the final consummation of union among churches in India which are working most earnestly for the formation of the South India United Church, a union which is planned to include churches which have episcopal ordination and those which have not. The earnestness of these men in India, both nationals and missionaries, who feel that the union they are working for is essential to the progress of the

cause of Christ, is very impressive. One cannot but feel that they will find a way by which real unity can be attained and thus be an example for all the churches in every land.

There is another problem, not so frequently mentioned but quite as real. If we are to aim at unity and not uniformity, provision must be made for other differences than that of the validity of the sacraments. Churches have other differences which are significant. A Baptist is by nature an independent. He holds to the inviolable right of the individual church to be the final arbiter of its own life. He has never consented to adopt a creed other than the Bible; "man-made" is his name for even the great historic creeds. And all this is as important as his insistence on baptism of adults by immersion. It is hard to think of a Congregationalist submitting to authority other than that of the democratically organized congregation of his own local church. How can the Friends, with practically no organization and no formal sacraments, be at home with those who believe ardently in close organization and insist on a very definite and binding creed? All of those belong to the family of God, the Church of Jesus Christ; and all must be kept in mind when we envisage the unified body of Christ, the one church in which all equally shall be at home and where each shall be able to express the fullness of his experience in Christ. The problem is too big for us. We cannot see our way through. We must fall back on our conviction that God is guiding his church and that if we follow the light as he gives us the light we shall ultimately be one, in a manner far more wonderful than even the wisest of us can imagine as we face the future.

In the meantime there is much for us to do. The world mission of the church is drawing the Christian forces into common action to an extent which could scarcely have been thought of a generation ago. The necessity of acting together to meet situations which have arisen in connection with the present World War has drawn the mission boards together closer than ever they have been in the past. The International Missionary Council is becoming more and more the uniting agency of the Christian mission in every part of the world. It may have an even more significant relation to the making of a

united church than we can realize at the present time. The great lesson we are learning is that the best thing we can do to foster unity when complete unity is not as yet possible is to work together, worship together, and thus make manifest the real unity which underlies the differences that keep the churches apart. Besides the International Missionary Council, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is an agency through which the common voice of the churches may be heard and their common tasks carried on. And in a wider way the World Council of Churches, now in process of formation, gives promise of performing an indispensable function for the churches of the entire world. Thus the agencies are at hand to make possible concerted action.

The Church of Christ is an ecumenical church. That is a fact of the highest significance. This feature is not something for which we are to look: it is a present reality. It is literally ecumenical, world-wide, for followers of Jesus Christ are now to be found in every part of the world. Groups of Christians—"cells," as J. H. Oldham has called them—have been established and organized into churches in almost every land. It is the world mission which has made possible this new realization, or consciousness, that there is a brotherhood made up of men of every race which is bound together as is no other group in the world. In fact, it is the only real fellowship among men today. All other bonds have been torn asunder by the enmities of war. Only the Christian Church has held together; its members are the only group which continues to have a sense of solidarity and fellow feeling, eager for the renewing of the fellowship which has been temporarily made impossible by the war.

The ecumenical church is one church despite the differences which keep its constituent members from full fellowship. That is the fundamental fact, overshadowing all others. Many there are who do not recognize this, but a fact it is nevertheless. And we who are missionary-minded should remind our own churches of the truth and fact of unity while working for a greater manifestation of that unity both at home and in mission lands. Then the world may be brought to the feet of our Christ, who prayed "that they may all be one; even

as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me."[8] Undoubtedly we shall find ourselves one at last, in a truly ecumenical communion, "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."[9] This is our hope and expectation—may the Lord hasten the day of its realization.

[8] John 17:21.
[9] Eph. 5:27.

Chapter XIX

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE STRATEGY OF THE WORLD MISSION CALLS FOR WELL-UNDERSTOOD principles which shall determine the program as the church faces the task lying before it in the future. The mission calls for certain definite objectives, the winning of converts to Jesus Christ and his cause, and the use of every means which can be discovered to make his gospel real and convincing to the children of men, in their personal lives and in their social relationships. It demands freedom to direct its own affairs, to preach the gospel, to educate children and adults who have come into the church, and to build up an adequate leadership. Without these there is little hope that the purpose of the mission can be carried out in the lands that are still not Christian. In close connection with this part of the strategy there is the further consideration that Christianity must become indigenous and be able to express the deepest aspirations of the various peoples and fit into their culture so that it can be as much at home as our religion can be in any culture. And then there is the church. There must be an organized fellowship, or there is no promise of permanence and no possibility of the development of the fruits of the Spirit either in individual lives or in their corporate relations. The church is the God-given means by which all that he purposes for men shall become a living reality in human life.

But is this all? Is there nothing more for us as Christians to look forward to as we peer into the limitless future? We may have outlined the general principles of our strategy; we may have our policies and programs; but still there must be a future beyond that which they contemplate and attempt to provide for.

It has already been suggested that the day will come when there will be no world mission in the sense in which we use the term today. Missionaries will no longer be sent to non-Christian lands, for

the church will be so firmly established and Christianity so integrated with the various cultures that what we know as missions will not be needed. There will rather be a mutual interchange between the churches in different countries, each desiring and willing to share with the others its insights and experiences, and each feeling the need of the help which may come from the others in solving its own problems. That is a long way off, and yet we have already a suggestion of what in the end will be complete mutuality. What Kagawa from Japan, Sadhu Sundar Singh from India, and T. Z. Koo from China have contributed to the life of Western Christianity is but an earnest of our expectation of a fuller interchange in years to come. We are already realizing that there can be no self-sufficiency in the Christianity of any country and that we need to draw from all in order to come to full-orbed completeness in our faith.

The statements just made may be correct, but they do not carry us as far as we should go. We have inklings of what will take place in the future but have no idea of the course of events. With all our learning and wisdom we are in no better position than the seers of the past as we try to interpret the signs of the times. Who could even dimly foretell the turns in the history of the past quarter-century as he thought of the meaning of events in the summer of 1914, when the First World War opened in Europe? And who today has the slightest idea what lies before us in the twenty-five years immediately ahead? The future is in the hands of God, and we do not know the counsels of the Most High. There may be as many centuries ahead of the human race on this planet as lie in the past, and there may be many more. The attempt to foretell the future by ingenious interpretations of apocalyptic passages in the Old and New Testaments is not reassuring in view of the litter of unfulfilled prognostications which lie scattered along the course of the Christian centuries.

Yet not without good ground is the belief held that, whatever may come, the Church of Jesus Christ will continue to function as God's appointed agency for the dissemination of his gospel and the conservation of the fruits of the Christian life in every part of the world. What else could take its place? Not that it will remain just as it is today, rent asunder, divided in its counsels, and in so many ways

unworthy of the name it bears. But it is still the Church of Jesus Christ and is the only agency which possesses the slightest promise of being able to perpetuate the tradition of the gospel, carry it to the world, and exist until its own great function has been achieved. With all that can be said about the church, however, something more is surely needed, and that need has been met by an even more wonderful conception. This conception has its roots in the Old Testament revelation; it was appropriated by Jesus and became his dominant theme. It is more far-reaching than the ideal of the church; it penetrates deeper and rises higher. It presents a view of the final realities and carries one farther into the counsels of God than any other conception in biblical revelation or in Christian doctrine. It is the idea of the Kingdom of God, proclaimed by Jesus as his aim in carrying out the will of his Father.

The distinction between the church and the kingdom is not as significant to the Roman Catholic as it is to the Protestant. For the Romanist the church—his church—is the one Holy Apostolic Cath olic Church and is to be almost, if not completely, identified with the Kingdom of God. The church is the kingdom of God on earth. As the pope, the bishop of Rome, is the vice-regent of Christ on earth, so is he Christ's representative and head of the church, charged with the bringing in of the kingdom by advancing the cause of the church among men. This identification of an earthly organization with the kingdom which Jesus saw as the complete embodiment of the purpose of God in the lives of men and in human society seems incongruous. It is not in line with what is said of the kingdom in the New Testament. By its exclusive claims, according to which many of the most devoted followers of Jesus cannot enter into communion with it, the Roman Church scarcely measures up to the description of the Kingdom of God as pictured in the words of Christ. There is an undoubted continuity of Christian life and spirit through the centuries since Jesus lived, but it is impossible that this continuity should have to be preserved by tactual succession when there is another and more spiritual succession clearly indicated in the New Testament. It is the continuity of conviction and spirit which is like the "wind"

which "bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth." [1] So it has been in the history of the Christian fellowship. The spirit of God has touched a man here, or again there, with no reference to ecclesiastical boundaries or church affiliations. And thus the flow of spiritual and moral vitality has been transmitted from the beginning to our own day, and fortunate are they who are able to discern the authentic word of God speaking through men and movements and churches to times like our own.

The Kingdom of God was Jesus' distinctive message. He proclaimed it over and over again and applied what he meant by it in various ways. The story of his mission begins thus: "Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel." [2] It is manifestly impossible here to enter into the long and intricate discussion of the meaning of the kingdom—a discussion, moreover, which is not at an end and which even yet discloses striking differences of opinion. It must be our purpose here merely to state certain conclusions which seem consistent and reasonable and which are pertinent to the world mission of Christianity.

One of the most obvious conclusions is that the Kingdom of God is not a kingdom in the ordinary understanding of the term. It is not a country or locality on earth where God is recognized as the ruler, with boundaries which separate it from other countries where God does not hold sway. Thus the word "kingdom" and even the world "realm" are likely to be misleading. The kingdom as Jesus saw it is something inward and more far-reaching than any human organization could be. It is the actual control by God of human life, and it reaches far down into the inner life, transforming men and society. So much is quite evident, but the conception is so massive that the bare statement above only clears a little of the ground.

If, then, the kingdom is not to be located at a definite place on the

[1] John 3:8.

[2] Mark 1:14-15.

globe, what is to be said of the time of its appearing? Would that we could say a sure word at this point. Scholars are divided in their opinions, and only a partial affirmation can be made. All scholarly authorities go back to Jesus and his initial declaration, "This time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel."[3] On the basis of this declaration it would surely seem that the kingdom was in a real sense ushered in at that time, that the kingdom already exists among men, and that we as Christians are members of it now. To put it in the words of Professor C. H. Dodd: "Here then is the fixed point from which our interpretation of the teaching regarding the Kingdom of God must start. It represents the ministry of Jesus as 'realized eschatology,' that is to say, as the impact upon this world of the 'powers of the world to come' in a series of events, unprecedented and unrepeatable, now in actual process."[4] This interpretation is not acceptable to many others who, like Professor E. F. Scott,[5] see the kingdom as belonging to an order of society entirely different from any possible human organization and consequently a kingdom not of this present world or age. It is in the future; it does not exist among us today; it still remains an expectation and a hope. To these scholars the words of Jesus, which would indicate that the kingdom was not only at hand but was being ushered in, have a somewhat different meaning. They believe that Jesus was convinced that the kingdom was coming so soon that he could think of it as "at hand," but while it was so close it was still a future event, an event which has even yet not taken place.

While there is this difference between those who are dealing with the sources, there is also agreement. All would unite in the statement that there is a consummation in the future which will be so wonderful that even the adumbrations we may see today are only the merest inklings of the reality of the coming of the kingdom in all its glory in God's own time. And there is also more or less agreement at an important point, on which there has been quite another opinion in the minds of Christian people, many of whom hold that the

[3] Mark 1:15.
[4] *The Parables of the Kingdom*, p. 51.
[5] See *The Nature of the Early Church*, chap. ii.

kingdom is to be brought in, at least partially, by what we ourselves as human beings do.

We are, it is often said, working to "bring in the kingdom," as if what we do or do not do will hasten or retard the day when the kingdom shall come. Are such men and women in error? We have good authority for praying, "Thy kingdom come"; but do we have the right to believe that our labors will actually usher it in? Surely not if we rise to the height of what the kingdom really means. When the realization comes home to us that it is God's kingdom, that it is the actual rule of God in the hearts of men, that the relations among men will be in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount, that the hindrances to holy living and harmony among men will be removed, and that the glory of God can and will be revealed as we have never known it under the conditions of the age in which we are living—when we realize all this, the conviction must surely be borne in upon us that only God is sufficient for these things and that he must bring in the Kingdom when it comes. In its final consummation it is a supernatural order quite different from anything connected with the present world order.

This conception, as has been suggested, runs counter to much modern thinking. The idea has been abroad that we must think of the coming of the Kingdom of God in terms of the theory of evolution and that by human endeavor we can hasten the process and bring in the good day for which men have been longing through the centuries. This, of course, is entirely out of harmony with the thought of the kingdom as found in the Synoptic Gospels. And may we not also say that it is out of harmony with the view to which we are almost sure to come when we consider seriously the nature of the changes which must prevail if the conditions which are to obtain in the Kingdom of God are seen in their true light? When Jesus is reported by John to have said, "My kingdom is not of this world," [6] it has the authentic ring. That was Jesus' attitude. As he saw the kingdom it went far beyond the limitations which this age must necessarily impose on any movement or event. Its coming is

[6] John 18:36.

a supernatural event; it is the coming into the life of men of something they could not achieve or even imagine.

There is a subtle danger lying in this conception which demands careful attention, for it touches closely on the philosophy of the world mission. If what we accomplish in promoting the world mission has little or nothing to do with the coming of the Kingdom of God, are not our hands weakened and are not we in a hopeless condition mentally and spiritually in trying to interpret the meaning of our work as God's servants? Is not our activity based on an almost inalienable conviction that we must "be doing something about it," and is it not likely to be frustrated by the thought that we must wait for God to act? This *activismus,* as the continental theologians call the restless activity on the part of Americans, is looked upon as incongruous. We have not learned reverently to stand in the presence of God and accept his will and await the working out of his purposes in his own good time. Is there any way of harmonizing the idea of working for the kingdom, and the belief that such work is really important and will count in the final outcome, with the conviction that God alone will bring in the kingdom?

Surely we have every incentive to work and to work very earnestly to carry the gospel to all men everywhere. Did not the Apostle Paul have real insight when he declared, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord";[7] and did not he also declare that God had "committed unto us the word of reconciliation"?[8] We agree, of course, that it is not our task to "bring in the Kingdom of God" as if its coming depended upon us, but that is not to say that our work has no connection with the outcome. God's purpose is one, and his kingdom is one, and it would seem passing strange that what we do to carry out God's purpose in the world could have no relation to the coming of his kingdom. What we are able to accomplish here must surely be built into the fabric of the completed plan.

There is another side, however, which we neglect at our peril. The

[7] I Cor. 15:58.
[8] II Cor. 5:19.

touch of the eternal is necessary if we are to secure the right perspective in our consideration of the Kingdom of God. With all that we may do, it is God's kingdom after all, and the mighty changes which must be brought about to make it a reality are so far beyond man's power that we must bow our heads in humiliation at the suggestion that it is our task to bring in the kingdom. There can be little self-satisfaction in thinking of our own work. Nevertheless, there may come a deepening conviction that not only we ourselves but the work we are attempting to do are in his hands and that he is working out partly through us his purposes which in the end must prevail. We shall not work less, but we shall come to a new inner quietness and serenity of spirit in the consciousness that we are included in the purposes of God and that our work cannot fail. Feverish anxiety will give place to confidence, apprehension to trust, and uncertainty to the sureness of faith. In a troubled time like the present we need an anchor which will hold no matter how fiercely the storm rages.

Because our God is the living God we may have confidence that there is a goal and that it will be attained. History must eventuate in a worth-while result because God is in it. That is the heritage which we as Christians have as a priceless possession. The beginnings of this conviction lie back in the Old Testament. It was the eye of the seer that recognized that God reveals himself in what he does and that human history is a record of that disclosure.

Still, as it is put by Canon F. R. Barry, "The will of God transcends the time process. The 'end' is obviously outside history."[9] So all those who are working with God that the kingdom may come are members of a society not of this world alone but also of the eternal world. To quote again, "Yet while sin remains in the world, and while men are subject to mortality, it could never be the Kingdom of God itself, but only an earthly colony or province of it. The kingdom can never be *fulfilled* in this world, under the conditions of mortality."[10] This sounds like the Apostle, whom we hear saying, "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour,

[9] *Faith in Dark Ages*, p. 75.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself." [11]

Only God himself can survey the entire historical scene and make his plan with the final consummation in view; but we human beings, his followers, are in the process nevertheless. We see enough to realize that we have a duty to perform and that it will contribute to the final outcome. God can get along without any one of us, but in the wonder and mystery of his plan we are led to realize that the method he has adopted includes the use of those who will enlist as good soldiers of Jesus Christ and become his faithful followers. We have traveled far beyond the naïve evolutionism of a half-century ago, when development was looked upon as inevitable. But we can see nonetheless that there is a God-ordained movement in history, that it is intended to lead to a magnificent climax, and that we are instruments in the process. It is God's plan, and his power is the dynamic; but what we do in his strength is not lost in the final outcome.

The early church lived in expectation of the immediate coming of the kingdom. It was the very air they breathed. But the kingdom did not come, and it became a real problem to settle down to a life which was very different from their early anticipation. We can detect the change in tone in the New Testament as the first century moved on towards the last quarter. It is discernible in the writings of Paul. By comparing his letters to the Thessalonians with his later letter to the Philippians, one can discover a change of emphasis from a vivid expectation of the speedy return of the Lord, which would mark the period of the establishment of the kingdom, to a more settled attitude which could see God's will being worked out even though the Day for which he was looking was delayed. And in the Fourth Gospel the idea of the kingdom gives way to another conception, that of eternal life, a life with God in Christ Jesus, already begun, and yet with the promise of a much fuller realization in the life hereafter.

During the Christian centuries, at every great upheaval in world

[11] Phil. 3:20-21.

history, there has been a recurrence of vivid expectation of a final coming of Christ and the Kingdom of God. A sinister being or force stands in the way, who ultimately will be overthrown. This anti-Christ has frequently been identified with a living personage, and the time of the end of human affairs on this earth has been definitely predicted. This has been done a hundred times over. Now the anti-Christ is Hitler, and in living memory it was the Kaiser. By making use of the symbolic numbers in the Book of Daniel and the Revelation it has been quite easy to set an exact date for the reappearing of the Son of Man and the inauguration of the kingdom. Luther made his calculation, and it came to the year 1558; the Millerites in New England sold their property, dressed themselves in white robes, assembled on an island in the Connecticut River, and waited for what they were sure would be the end, in 1833. So it has gone through the centuries, with little hope even now that the manipulators have learned the lesson of history and will cease their futile calculating.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that these devoted men and women, deluded though they may have been, had secure hold on a conviction which should be the possession of every follower of the Lord Jesus. They were in a state of expectancy, looking to God to do great things for his people. To lose that hope is to lose the vividness and even the reality of a living Christian experience. God is our Father; he has yet to reveal himself and his will to his children; our ears must be kept in tune with his revelation in Christ that what he has yet to say may not be misinterpreted. This age is not the final stage of God's relation with his people; there is an age yet to come, not an extension of life as we know it here but a new creation in a realm wherein dwelleth righteousness and peace and joy in fellowship with God himself.

Our missionary enterprise and all that it stands for, the Church of Jesus Christ with its blessed fellowship, the lives of those who have given themselves in self-forgetting service—yes, everything in this world which has been touched with the life of God is to be swallowed up in a consummation whose wonder we cannot imagine and whose glory we cannot now experience. In the words of the great missionary Apostle we may try to express what in its deepest meaning cannot be

compassed in human thought or fitted into the structure of the languages men use:

> Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. . . . . And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all.[12]

[12] I Cor. 15:24-28.

APPENDIX

PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

The peoples of Latin America and of the United States of America are coming closer together in friendly relationship. After many decades of misunderstanding and suspicion it is being recognized that their interests are in many important respects one and that they should work together for the common good. The "Good Neighbor" policy is more and more dominating the relations between the various countries. The World War in which we are now engaged is strengthening these bonds, so that we may look forward to an era of good will and helpfulness such as we have never known before.

On the other hand, the Latin American republics have had a very different religious history from our own and are today far separated from us in their outlook and attitudes. These countries are predominantly Roman Catholic, while with us the Protestant tradition has been the more characteristic. It is very important at this time of growing friendly relations to understand this aspect of the life of these peoples as well as others. Much attention is being given to economic, social, and political conditions, but very little to religion. And yet nothing has done more to shape the life and thought of Latin America than the presence of the Roman Catholic Church, which came in with the conquistadors and has remained strongly entrenched ever since.

For over a hundred years Protestantism has had its representatives in these lands. A number of Protestant denominations, mostly from the United States of America, have been carrying on missionary work and now have their representatives in every country south of the Rio Grande. They have done so believing they are answering a divine call and are meeting a need which can be met in no other way. The success which they have achieved would seem to indicate that they have been right in their diagnosis and justified in the continuance of their ministrations. Not only are there thousands who give testimony to a vital Christian experience and to a freedom of outlook

which they had never known before, but there are many indications in the life of these countries that the presence of Protestantism is a leaven which is having a most salutary influence in every feature of the corporate life.

By its very presence in these lands Protestantism has met the strenuous opposition of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. This has been shown in many ways, even reaching at times the point of physical violence. But always, by every method which might be thought effective to accomplish its purpose, the dominant church has attempted to frustrate and even eliminate the work of Protestantism. This is not surprising when one considers the history of the relations of the two branches of the church in Europe. It is mentioned here because it must enter into all our thinking about the work of Protestantism in Latin America. This opposition is voiced, not only in these countries themselves, but in Roman Catholic journals and representatives in this country. In fact, it would often seem that the source of these attacks was in this country and that the echo was there. Every few years a fresh attack is opened at these missions. Just now (1942) articles are appearing in the Roman Catholic press in the United States making vigorous protest against what the writers consider unwarranted intrusion into a field already occupied by Christian forces. They seem to assume that it is perfectly proper for Roman Catholicism to make converts and occupy territory where Protestantism has long been present and is occupying the field, but that it is intolerable effrontery for Protestantism to do likewise where they are well established.[1]

We have already gone far enough to realize that missionary work on the part of Protestant churches in Latin America must be considered from a viewpoint very different from that with which we approach missions to non-Christian peoples. The philosophy of the Christian world mission which has occupied our attention in this volume cannot be applied to Latin America at a number of important points. These countries are nominally Christian; the religion which prevails—with the exception of that of many of the aboriginal Indians—is Roman Catholic Christianity; the relation of religion

[1] See "Religious Liberty or Monoply?" in *The Christian Century*, July 29, 1942.

and the state has taken a form which raises problems different from those in non-Christian lands—these are a few of the points which show the uniqueness of the problem faced when we would study and justify the presence of Protestantism in Roman Catholic countries. So far as the argument which has been presented in these pages is concerned, a devout Roman Catholic who is interested in missions might find himself in agreement with many of the positions which have been maintained. Of course, he would take exception to many statements, and here and there would find himself completely opposed to the argument; but—and this is the important point—much of what has been said in this book applies to the whole Christian missionary enterprise, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic.

It is incumbent, then, on the upholders of Protestant mission policy with respect to Latin America to make plain what their position is, that is, why they feel justified in conducting the enterprise in lands which are claimed by the Roman Catholic Church as its own preserve. It is with that end in view that this supplementary chapter is being written. The argument to be presented here is not a part of the philosophy of missions to non-Christians but is important because such work is included in the missionary program of many Protestant churches.

In the first place, the reasons advanced are not based on the charge that the Roman Catholic Church is not a Christian church. When it is remembered that we were all once united in a common church, in a day when there was no distinction between an Eastern and a Western church, that later we of the West were all members of the same body and there were no Protestants separate and distinct from Roman Catholics, that the Roman Church has produced saints in the past and is doing so today—when we realize all this the only conclusion we can reach is that men and women are coming into vital relation with God in Jesus Christ in Catholicism, and this, we must remember, is the first mark of a Christian church.

On what basis, then, can Protestants be justified in their conviction that the gospel they preach is needed in a land where the Roman Catholic Church is present, claims to be occuping the field, and looks on Protestant work as an intrusion? It can be justified only on the

ground that there is a real need which is not being met and which calls for what Protestantism can provide. The Roman Catholic Church claims to be occupying the entire field in Latin America and to be sufficient to meet the need completely. It is at this point that a sharp difference of opinion arises. In the first place, there are tens of thousands of aboriginal Indians who are as completely pagan as any primitive, animistic people to be found anywhere. Every reason which can be given why we should take the gospel to the Bantu in Africa may be applied to Latin America. After four hundred years many of these Indians are unreached and stand in need of the ministrations of Christianity as much as any people in the world.

But that is not where the tension is felt at its most sensitive point. What may be discovered by even a cursory survey of the Latin American countries is that great numbers of people, nominally Roman Catholic, are separated from the influences of religion as far as it is possible for them to be in a land of churches and formal religious observances. They have turned away from Roman Catholicism—the only religion they have ever known—as unable to satisfy their minds and hearts, and have become irreligious. This is particularly true of the intelligentsia, especially the men, who have no religion at all and do not even believe they have any religious need. So far has this attitude penetrated that increasingly it is looked upon as normal. Here is a statement from the late Juan B. Teran, formerly a university rector in the Argentine: "Men of the upper class keep aloof from all religious affairs, believing them to be for women only. At best they take up an attitude of benevolent neutrality. They are not atheists, because to be an atheist would be a sign of having reflected on religious problems. They are simply indifferent and Epicurean."[2]

But even more serious than this unfortunate situation is the charge, very widely made, that the Roman Catholic Church is largely responsible for the condition. It is impossible here to survey with any completeness the evidence for this charge. It may be found in many volumes and articles.[3] Here are some of the items. The Roman Catholic Church has been satisfied with superficial methods of conver-

[2] Quoted in Rycroft, *On This Foundation*, p. 61.

[3] See *On This Foundation* and the bibliography which it contains.

sion and with nominal acceptance of the Christian faith. It has been so absorbed in making provision for the salvation of the soul after death that it has given little or no attention to the cultivation of the Christian life, the education of the young, and the relations of men with each other in the life that now is. The facts of the social life of the people are deplorable. The church has not promoted education or fostered a healthy intellectual life. It has not given the people the Bible—it is only beginning to do this now under the stimulus of the Protestant workers and the Bible societies. Very unfortunately, the character of the priesthood is not such as to commend Christianity to the serious-minded seeker after religion. This, of course, is a matter of deep regret to Roman Catholics in this country; it is mentioned as a part of the problem of religion in Latin America. What religion the masses of the people have is largely a matter of form, in many cases the Virgin Mary taking the place of Christ, so that mariolatry has been spoken of as the real religion of the people.

And further, religion is and has always been so entangled with politics that it has been declared that "Romanism is not a religion, but a political organization." The church has always opposed the principle of liberty of conscience and has resisted tolerance and the right of any other church to preach and teach. The clerical party has almost always been on the side of reaction against liberal views, socially, economically, and politically. The count against the prevailing church is a heavy one. It is no wonder that an increasing number of men and women are turning to a gospel which liberates their minds and makes it possible for them to face the future with hope of a new day of moral and religious freedom for themselves and their fellow countrymen.

The Protestant forces in Latin America are known as "Evangelicals." They prefer this name because it presents positively and constructively the essential meaning of what they stand for and what they are seeking to do. That is, these churches are standing for the gospel as it is found in its purity in the New Testament and as it came out of the Reformation, free from the additions of ecclesiastical tradition, which had changed its form and substance. This would include not only the doctrine of salvation by faith alone in our Lord

Jesus Christ but a living relation of immediate contact between man and God without the necessary intervention of priest, ritual, or sacrament. The whole claim of Rome that it is the only true church and that there is no salvation without its ministration—this exclusive doctrine must be looked upon as being untrue to the gospel of Christ. With a very different outlook the Evangelicals go about their work in Latin America. They represent a number of different denominations but are united in the great primary affirmations of their common faith, emphasizing their likenesses and building up a unified community which more and more feels the strength of the bond which holds them together.

Despite the deep differences which exist between them and the Roman Catholics and in face of the opposition of the hierarchy, the Evangelicals are increasingly adopting a policy which is not negative in its opposition, but positive in its proclamation of the gospel as they see it. They do not attack the dominant church; they teach the essential doctrines of their evangelical faith and allow its truths to sink into the minds of the people who in increasing numbers come to them. Of course, they defend their position when necessary, but that is quite different from being Crusaders militantly organized to do battle against an enemy which must be defeated and driven from the field. What the people of Latin America need is the proclamation of a message of salvation which will give them victory over their sins, freedom in their inner lives, and a demonstration of the meaning of the Christian life in all the relations of society. This the Roman Catholic Church has never given to Latin America, and that fact is what gives the Evangelicals their power and their opportunity.

Are these inadequacies and errors inherent in the system, or are they peculiar to the Roman Church in Latin America? Undoubtedly, the church there is very different from the Roman Church in England and the United States. This is admitted and even deplored by intelligent Roman Catholics in this country. They look for a better day when the criticisms now leveled at conditions in Latin America can no longer be justly charged against them. How could any Protestant be anything but sincerely eager for that happier day to dawn?

Some things can undoubtedly be changed for the better. As at a

number of times in the history of the Roman Church in Europe when the priesthood had fallen to a very low level in education and morality, disciplinary measures can again be strictly applied with the hope of very great improvement. With improvement here the church might throw the weight of its influence into the movement for popular education, insisting on a much higher degree of intelligence among the common people than it has ever been known to demand in the past. The church can in the future provide the people with the Bible in their own language. Much of this lies a long distance in the future, but it is a distinct possibility. But how much more can be expected? Can we ever look to the Roman Church to stand for tolerance, freedom of conscience and worship, and the right of men to think and act freely according to their own judgment? The outlook is not bright. It is a matter of only a few months since Rome entered into an agreement or concordat with Spain, dominated by Franco, which makes it illegal for any other church to come into Spain and teach the people. The Roman Church is and always has been intolerant and can be expected to do all in its power to exclude any church or any teaching which it does not control. This has been the bane in Latin America. Whenever any church has been for a long period in a country without any competition, it has tended to become ever more bigoted and intolerant. Coupled with this fact is the settled policy of the curia in Rome to back up that attitude. We have, then, an effective force which stifles all liberal movements and is all too frequently satisfied with things as they are. This is the canker eating at the heart of the Roman system, and so long as it continues to act we must expect the inevitable fruitage, just in so far as local conditions make it possible.

The work of Protestantism in Latin America is called the "Evangelical Witness." It stands for all that makes for freedom—the rights of man as man; liberty of worship and conscience; the opportunity to declare the whole counsel of God as it is found in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scriptures, unfettered and unlimited by any human restraint. And so long as the danger exists in Latin America—or anywhere else—that these fundamental items in the divine "Bill of Rights" shall

be lost, so long must Protestantism take its task seriously and proclaim its message in these countries.

These Evangelical churches are now to be found in every one of the countries to the south of our republic. It has not been an easy task; it is not easy now; but it has been very rewarding. Small but growing churches, schools—some of them very important institutions of higher education—and the spread of evangelical literature attest the hold it has taken. In some countries the churches are still small and weak, while in others, notably in Brazil, the Evangelicals have become a large body with important local churches and exercising an influence far beyond the bounds of its own membership. It is known to stand for all that makes for man's advance and consequently is honored and respected by many who have not come into its membership but who believe it is filling a need which the Roman Church cannot be expected to meet. One of the most encouraging features of the outlook in recent years is the rise of very able national leaders who are themselves taking the task seriously and who give promise that the Evangelical Witness shall not die out but shall continue to bear its testimony that there is an attitude to God in Jesus Christ which is as free as the very air we breath and which promises for man all that will send him out equipped to make him a force for righteousness and godly living in a needy land.

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